

# Sunday Dhamma Talks

## Volume 6



Dr. Phra Rajyanvisith (Hon. D.)

- Social Harmony Brings Peaceful Happiness • Essential Dhamma for Fruitful Living
  - The Buddhist Way of Life is Difficult • Avoid Fools - Seek the Wise
- Only Loving-Kindness Conquers Hatred • Gratitude, Virtue & Democracy:  
Appreciating and Rescuing the Motherland



# **Sunday Dhamma Talks**

## **Volume 6**

by

**Dr. Phra Rajyanvisith (Hon. D.)**

President, National Coordination Center of Provincial  
Meditation Institutes of Thailand

Abbot, Wat Luang Phor Sodh Dhammakāyārām

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We dedicate this book and any merit it may generate, along with all our efforts at Wat Luang Phor Sodh – The beautiful campus, the Abbot’s teachings, Phra Mahā Cetiya Somdej, the International Retreats, the Thai Retreats, and the 24-hour Meditation Vihāra – to our beloved



**Venerable Chao Khun Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni**  
**Luang Phor Sodh Candasaro**





**Dr. Phra Rajyanvisith (Hon. D.)**

Meditation Master, Buddhist Scholar and Educator,  
President, the National Coordination Center of  
Provincial Meditation Institutes of Thailand,  
Director, the Meditation Center of Rajburi Province, and  
Abbot, Wat Luang Phor Sodh Dhammakayaram.



**Phra Khru Baitika**  
**Dr. Barton Yanathiro**

Secretary for International Affairs  
and Sunday Dhamma Talk Interviewer and Editor

## Acknowledgements

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I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Phra Khru Baitika Dr. Barton Yanathiro for serving as interviewer during these broadcasts and as the editor of this volume. May he also share in reaping the benefits of any merit generated.

Finally, let me also express my deep gratitude to Phra Mahā Prasert Paññāseṭṭho and Phra Natpakanan Guṇaṅkaro of the Wat Luang Phor Sodh Publication's Office, to Phra Mahā Somchat and the Wat Luang Phor Sodh Audio-Visual Staff, to Phra Watcharapol Thirajitto for photography, and to my faithful Secretary Phra Mahā Chainipoj for their indispensable support in making this endeavor successful.

*Phra Rajyanvisith*

Dr. Phra Rajyanvisith

Abbot, Wat Luang Phor Sodh Dhammakāyārām  
 President, National Coordination Center of Provincial  
 Meditation Institutes of Thailand

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## **INTRODUCTION**

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“Happy Day!” I’m your editor, Phra Bart or Phra Khru Baitika Dr. Barton Yanathiro, from the United States. In BE 2550 (CE 2007) the National Broadcasting System of Thailand invited Venerable Chao Khun Dr. Phra Rajyanvisith to initiate a series of Sunday Dhamma Talks in English each month. I served as interviewer.

Dr. Phra Rajyanvisith is one of Thailand’s most eminent meditation masters, Buddhist scholars, and educators, with an extremely impressive record well recognized from local through international levels. He is the National Coordinator of Provincial Meditation Institutes of Thailand; Director of the Center for Development of Virtues and Ethics for the Security of the Nation, Religion and Monarchy; and Abbot of Wat Luang Phor Sodh Dhammakayaram. In 2009 and 2010 he received the silver and gold awards from the Thai National Office of Buddhism (the Thai Sangha Body) for outstanding contribution to the dissemination of Buddhism.

## Sunday Dhamma Talks

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This is Volume 6 in the continuing series of Sunday Dhamma Talks. Volume 1 began with an overview of Lord Buddha’s teachings and continued through the first of the Three Trainings (*Trisikkhā*) which is Morality (*Sīla*). Volume 2 completed the Higher Trainings with Concentration (*Samatha*) and Insight (*Vipassanā*) Meditation and then focused on Lord Buddha’s instructions for meditation in the “Greater Discourse on the Four Foundations of Mindfulness” (*Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna-sutta*). Volume 3 expanded on basics – morality or “Do Good!” – selfless generosity, loving kindness and compassion, expressed through Right Thought, Intentions Speech, Action, and Livelihood. Volumes 4 and 5 discussed Lord Buddha’s popular discourse on Life’s Highest Blessings.

### Volume Six

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This Volume covers the series of broadcasts from January through June of 2010, a period that started with the turmoil of Red Shirts vs. Yellow Shirts and bloody shootouts in the streets of Bangkok. Thus, the volume stresses that social harmony brings peaceful happiness. Beginning with such social-level problems, however, the teachings turn to personal-level advice on how each of us can guide our own life toward higher goals.

Chapter 2 states the theme explicitly. It highlights three basic causes underlying the social conflict and then recommends Lord Buddha's six *Sāraṇiya-dhamma* or Acts of Conciliation as ways of overcoming the conflict. Chapter 3 focuses on personal core values (*Sāradhamma*) for overcoming suffering and living joyfully. These can be human-level based on precepts, celestial-level based on Divine Abode (*Brahma-vihāra*) virtues, or transcendent-level based on Perfections.

Chapter 4 emphasizes that the Buddhist path is not easy. Being born human, staying alive, hearing the True Teachings and becoming a Buddha are all very difficult. They require diligent mindfulness. Chapter 5 reiterates Lord Buddha's admonishment to avoid fools and seek out the wise. Fools include both those who wander aimlessly and those who behave shamelessly based on wrong view, courting dangers, obstacles and accidents which can engulf their associates. In contrast, wise-men who live mindfully can open opportunities for oneself and one's family.

Chapter 6 bears the message that only loving-kindness can conquer hatred. This highlights the psychological roots underlying social conflict and pinpoints the affection, compassion, forbearance and forgiveness that we should each mindfully foster in our personal behavior. Finally, Chapter 7 brings us back to the social and national-level application of all these considerations: the gratitude we owe



to our country for mothering us, the unity we need to live together in peaceful harmony, the requirement to elect wise representatives who will act advantageously with loving kindness and compassion, and the necessity for national leaders to act with integrity, justice and virtue for the good of the nation and the people as a whole.

In conclusion, we can properly honor our King by legally formalizing a constitutional monarchy with sovereignty stemming from the consensus of all citizens who then request the King to serve as Head of State and employ the power to govern.

## **Dr. Phra Rajyanvisith (Hon. D.)**

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Now, I would like to introduce Venerable Dr. Phra Rajyanvisith for those who are not yet familiar with him. He is the Abbot of Wat Luang Phor Sodh Dhammakayaram in Damnoen Saduak District of Rajburi Province, Thailand. His mission is to stimulate Buddhism, placing equal emphasis on academic study and meditation practice.

Dr. Phra Rajyanvisith (Hon. D.) has been broadcasting, lecturing and publishing about Buddhism since 1970 and toured universities in the United States for four years, before the press of responsibilities at home became too demanding. In 1986, he ordained as a monk with the name

Sermchai Jayamanggalo. In 1998 he received the Royal Ecclesiastical Rank of Phra Bhavana Visutthikhun; and in 2004 he was awarded the rank of Phra Rajyanvisith.

Dr. Phra Rajyanvisith has been the Abbot of Wat Luang Phor Sodh Dhammakayaram, which he founded and built, since 1991 and has led the temple to become a recognized center of excellence in meditation practice, Pāli language, scripture studies, and Buddhist management. The temple conducts or coordinates training locally for Rajburi Province, regionally for Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University and Ecclesiastical Region 15 (four central provinces), nationally for the Thai National Office of Buddhism, and internationally for the World Buddhist University.

Dr. Phra Rajyanvisith has published over 70 books, 400 articles, and two journals, and recorded over 1,000 Dhamma lectures. In 2007 he was awarded an honorary doctorate in Buddhist Principles of Management from Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University and in 2009 he received a second honorary Ph.D. in Buddhist Studies from Mahamagut University. In 2008 he was elected National Coordinator of the Provincial Meditation Institutes of Thailand and in 2009 he was appointed Director of the Center for Development of Virtues and Ethics for the Security of the Nation, Religion and Monarchy. In 2009 and 2010 Dr. Phra Rajyanvisith received the silver and gold awards from

the Thai National Office of Buddhism (the Thai Sangha Body) for outstanding contribution to the dissemination of Buddhism.

In sum, Dr. Phra Rajyanvisith has an extremely impressive record which has been widely recognized. You will find that the broadcasts compiled here go far beyond the ordinary in both scholastic erudition and inspiration for meditation practice. This is an exceptional union of academic and transcendental knowledge, rarely available in English. Please take full advantage of it.

*Phra Khru Baitika Dr. Barton Yanathiro,  
Interviewer and Editor.*



## **SOCIAL HARMONY BRINGS PEACEFUL HAPPINESS**

*03 January 2010*

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Question 1: Welcome, Venerable Dr. Phra Rajyan-visith. We look forward to starting the new year with more of your inspiring wisdom. This will be our 31<sup>st</sup> broadcast, going stronger than ever. Can you please review briefly what we covered last time.

Answer 1: Happy New Year, ladies and gentlemen. Last time we reflected on the gratitude that we all owe to Thailand for the generous nurturing that we have received. The Pāli word for Gratitude is *Kataññū*. It means recognizing that one has been the recipient of valuable help and feeling thankful for the kindness. *Kataññū* is usually paired with *Katavedī*, meaning expressing this feeling in words and deeds. Lord Buddha identified two types of people who are very hard to find in this stingy world. First is the initial benefactor (*Pubbakārī*) who selflessly volunteers help. Second,

even harder to find is the recipient who recognizes his debt and does something to repay it (*Kataññū-katavedī*).

Lord Buddha said four things are necessary for entry into Heaven: Right Action, Right Speech, Right Thought, and Gratitude. Gratitude is a powerful virtue for overcoming our natural tendencies towards greediness. We should recognize our interconnectedness; appreciating how the foundation of knowledge stored in our country's social and cultural heritage and the efforts of our parents, teachers and friends have all contributed to our own successes.

Current conflicts in Thailand originated with the coup d'état of September 19<sup>th</sup> BE 2549 (CE 2006) and became institutionalized in the Constitution of BE 2550 that rescinded the sovereignty of the Thai people, replacing it with domination by a privileged elite. This clash has continued to engulf Thailand until today, disrupting political, governmental and economic development as well as the nation's reputation as a "land of smiles," foreign investment and the tourism industry. Those who love their country advise both sides to step back and reduce the level of conflict. Such cooperation, however, is not yet feasible. The conflict will continue as long as the underlying root cause remains unknown and not eradicated.

Those with higher mindfulness, wisdom and understanding of karma are few. If there were more people with wisdom, the conflict might be solved through negotiation

and compromise. Therefore, I urge all of us to practice according to Lord Buddha's teachings by establishing Right Mindfulness, making our minds peaceful, and contemplating the benefits our nation provides as a place to live and earn a living.

Let us all work together to protect our country and solve these conflicts, tracing the cause of the cause back to the root cause of the problem, seeing clearly who or what is at the center of the problem, giving rise to these escalating conflicts between the popular majority and a small clique of powerful elites that threatens to sink our nation into a catastrophic morass of bloodshed. Then, let us work together to extinguish each and every cause, following six behavioral principles. First, the principle of right behavior in accordance with the Five Precepts, the law, the rules of responsible authorities, and the consensus of the general public. Second, the principle of appropriate behavior in accordance with the people, social situation, time and place involved. Third, the principle of behaving with a pure mind free from the influences of greed, hatred and delusion. Fourth, the principle of behaving fairly with justice, not subject to prejudice or bias stemming from love, desire, hatred, delusion or fear. Fifth, the principle of behaving with sacrifice, being ready to give up one's own happiness for the benefit of the majority. Finally sixth, behaving with the Brahmavihara principles of loving kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity. Collectively, such joint

behavior can foster peace and prosperity for our whole country.

Question 2: Thank you very much, Dr. Phra Rajyan-visith. Now, venerable sir, what is our topic for today?

*Ekadhammo, Bhikkhave, loke uppajjamāno uppajjati bahujanahitāya bahujana-sukhāya bahujanassa atthāya; hitāya sukhāya devamanussānaṃ katamo ekadhammo? Saṅghassa sāmaggīti.*

[Khuddhakanikaya, 25/197/238.]

One dhamma, Bikkhus, arising in the world, bears great help and happiness for everyone.

Help and happiness for both angels and humans. What is that dhamma? It is social harmony.

Question 3: Is there social harmony in Thailand today?

Answer 3: Throughout the three years since the military coup d'État of September 19<sup>th</sup> BE 2549, the Thai populace have been besieged by a multitude of national political, economic and social problems. Initially, the conflict was defined as Red Shirts vs. Yellow Shirts. Red Shirts represented the broad-based supporters of the democrati-

cally elected Taksin government which was forcibly overthrown by the military coup. Yellow Shirts represented powerful Bangkok elites supporting the coup group. But, Red Shirt supporters have since prevailed in two successive elections and Yellow Shirt supporters have dwindled to insignificance. Despite Red Shirt successes in the polls, however, an “invisible hand” intervened to form the current government led by the second-place Democrat Party. Thus, present conflicts are among the Red Shirts, the current government, and powerful elites.

There are three root causes underlying the conflict.

1. First, the conflict stems from a small, core group of persons, not society as a whole. This is a band of powerful people who do not agree with public opinion. The conflict originates with this group and spreads out to those supporting each fraction.
2. Second is the clash between the authoritarian paternalism of Bangkok elites and the democratic ideals espoused by the national electorate. Neither of these truly reflects the Thai political system. The majority seem to agree that a mixture of democracy and monarchy like that embodied in the Constitution of BE 2540 works best. The powerful clique behind the current conflict, however, seems to place itself above the law and has instigated dishonorable dirty tricks. They publicize the offenses of others, but cannot recognize their own transgressions.



3. Finally, those who study Buddha-Dhamma will understand that the conflict ultimately stems from defilements (*Kilesa*), craving (*Taṇhā*) and attachment (*Upādāna*) which condition the minds of those without wisdom to behave selfishly with greed, anger, aggression, jealousy, hatred, and violence, potentially leading to killing each other.

When conflict arises, well-intentioned people try to help by pointing out right and wrong or providing helpful comments. But, those with wrong intentions always look for the mistakes of others and seek to convince the crowd to follow their way. This is like pointing the index finger at others while the remaining three fingers point at oneself.

Thus, conflict is spreading increasingly across the country, slowing political, governmental, social and economic development and raising concern that it could one day lead to the fall of the nation.

Question 4: Thank you very much, venerable sir. Now, specifically, what can we do to help resolve this conflict?

Answer 4: Lord Buddha listed six main causes of conflict leading to schism in the Sangha. They are:

1. Being easily angered or holding a grudge,
2. Being arrogant or conceited, disparaging others and acting brazenly,
3. Being jealous, resentful or stingy,
4. Being deceitful, hypocritical or boastful,
5. Being addicted to obscene pornography, and
6. Being obstinate about one's own view, not ready to listen to others.

Those who do not practice the Three Trainings (morality, concentration and developing wisdom) are likely to be overwhelmed by such factors. Those who lack gratitude to their nation can be easily overpowered by wrong view and ensnared in bitter conflict. It is hard for them to remain honorable, objective and wise. Lord Buddha concludes:

Even if one bestows all treasures and lands on those who lack gratitude, they always find fault. It is impossible to satisfy them [Khuddhakanikaya, 27/72/23].

Finally, Lord Buddha has taught six *Sāranīya-dhamma* or Acts of Conciliation for overcoming conflict which can help us solve the current problems engulfing Thailand. These are:

1. *Mettākāya-kamma*: Being amiable in all deeds, both public and private,

2. *Mettāvacī-kamma*: Being amiable in all speech, both public and private,
3. *Mettāmano-kamma*: Being amiable in all thoughts, both public and private,
4. *Sādhāraṇa-bhogitā*: Sharing all lawful gains with virtuous fellows,
5. *Sīla-sāmaññatā*: Keeping without blemish all rules of conduct, and
6. *Diṭṭhi-sāmaññatā*: Being endowed with right view, in both public & private.

*Diṭṭhi-sāmaññatā* also includes acting in accordance with such Right View, for example, supporting a true constitutional monarchy regime with valid sovereignty based in the populace. The people, then, surrender their sovereignty to the King and the king governs in three ways: (1) Via public administration through the cabinet, (2) Via legislation through parliament, and (3) Via justice, through the court system.

Question 5: Thank you very, very much, Dr. Phra Rajyanvisith. We deeply appreciate your profound wisdom regarding these crucial issues. Now, could you please lead us in a few moments of meditation.

[Please see meditation practice on Chapter 7 page 65.]

**ESSENTIAL DHAMMA  
FOR FRUITFUL LIVING**

*07 February 2010*

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Question 1: Venerable Dr. Phra Rajyanvisith, we bid you welcome and await more of your inspiring wisdom. This will be our 32<sup>nd</sup> consecutive broadcast. Could you please review briefly what we covered last time.

Answer 1: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Last time we discussed that social harmony brings peaceful happiness. Since the military coup d'État of September 19<sup>th</sup> BE 2549, the Thai people have been besieged by a multitude of national political, economic and social problems. Initially, this was conflict between the broad-based Red Shirts and the Yellow Shirts representing the powerful Bangkok elites supporting the coup group. Since then, Red Shirt supporters have prevailed in two successive elections and Yellow Shirt supporters have dwindled to insignificance. Despite Red Shirt successes in the polls, however, an

“invisible hand” intervened to form the current government led by the second-place Democrat Party. Thus, present conflicts are between the Red Shirts and various powerful elites.

There are three underlying root causes of the conflict: First, the conflict stems from a small core group of powerful people who do not agree with public opinion, rather than from society as a whole. The second cause is the clash between the authoritarian paternalism of Bangkok elites and the democratic ideals espoused by the national electorate, neither of which reflects Thai realities. Many feel that a mixture of democracy and monarchy like that embodied in the Constitution of BE 2540 works best. Buddhist scholars recognize that such conflict ultimately stems from defilements (*Kilesa*), craving (*Taṇhā*) and attachment (*Upādāna*) which condition selfish greed, anger, and aggression that can potentially lead to killing. Conflict continues to spread, slowing political, governmental, social and economic development, and raising fear that it could one day lead to the fall of the nation.

Lord Buddha identified six main causes of conflict leading to schism in the Sangha: resentment, arrogance, stinginess, deceit, lust, and stubbornness. Most pervasive is lack of gratitude: “Even if one bestows all treasures and lands on those who lack gratitude, they always find fault. It is impossible to satisfy them.” Lord Buddha, also, taught six Acts of

Conciliation (*Sāraṇīya-dhamma*) for overcoming conflict: Being amiable in all deeds, all speech, and all thoughts, sharing gains, keeping precepts without blemish, and having right view. In this context, Right View, *Diṭṭhi-sāmaññatā*, should include supporting true constitutional monarchy with valid sovereignty based in the whole population. In Thai style, the people, then, surrender sovereignty to the King, who governs in three ways: Via public administration through the cabinet, via legislation through parliament, and via justice, through the court system. Each of these three parts works independently of the others.

Question 2: Thank you very much, venerable Dr. Phra Rajyanvisith. Now, sir, what will we study today?

Answer 2: Today we focus on Essential Dhamma for fruitful living to triumph over suffering, sustain the vital spirit for joyful living, and develop upward to celestial, Brahman and transcendent levels. This is called *Sāradhamma* in Pāli and translated as แก้วพระสาร (kaensan) or “heartwood” in Thai. In the Khuddhakanikaya, Lord Buddha taught:

<i>Asāre sāramatino</i>	<i>Sāre cāsāradassino</i>
<i>Te saraṃ nādhigacchanti</i>	<i>Micchāsaṅkappagocarā</i>
<i>Sārañca sārato ñatva</i>	<i>Asārañca asārato</i>
<i>Te saraṃ adhigacchanti</i>	<i>Sammasaṅkappagocarā.</i>

[Khuddhakanikaya, 25/11/16.]

He who sees False Dhamma and calls it True, and sees True Dhamma and calls it false, holds Wrong View and will never attain essential Dhamma.

He who sees True Dhamma and calls it True, and sees False Dhamma and calls it False, holds Right View and will attain essential Dhamma.

Here, Dhamma means “Virtues that should be practiced,” because we are focusing on positive lessons for life. The ultimate virtue is to discover for yourself and fully realize your own True, ultimate nature. We begin with ordinary human virtues that bring immediate benefits in this lifetime and then continue to consider the essential virtues of the celestial and Brahman levels. Finally, we turn to the essential transcendent virtuous practices leading to the nine supra-mundane phenomena – the Four Paths, Four Fruits and One Nirvana. These are the ultimate Essential Virtues (*Sāradhamma*).

Question 3: First, please tell us about the practical, human-level virtues that lead to direct benefits here and now.

Answer 3: The Essential Virtues or *Sāradhamma* to be practiced at the Human level are the ten key practices embodied in the Five Precepts. There are three bodily ac-

tions – refraining from killing, stealing and sexual misbehavior. Then, there are four verbal actions – refraining from lying such as deception, harsh language such as cursing, divisive speech such as scandal-bearing, and useless speech such as gossip. Finally, there are also three mental actions – refraining from greed, hatred and delusion.

A common consequence of killing is a blood feud that can continue over many lifetimes. Killers may also be killed in return within the current lifetime. In any case, killing leads to rebirth in hell for a long time. When reborn as humans, killers will again be killed. They generally have very short lifetimes and are often seriously ill or continually weak. Some meet with other disasters and become lame or die. Others commit suicide, and some die before they are released from the womb or egg. Killing can also lead to natural disasters such as floods and earthquakes. This is the Law of Karma. Those who meditate to high enough levels to recall past lifetimes can see this.

Stealing includes cheating and corruption as well as improper livelihood such as dealings with the sex industry and drug or alcohol products that engage one in harmful activities on a daily basis. Intoxicants all cause severe deterioration of physical and mental health, aggravate cravings, and contribute to degeneration of both the family and social economies.



Wrongful sexual activity means, most specifically, intentional adultery. It occurs due to failure to control sexual feelings when the sense organs come in contact with arousing stimuli. When the mind is overcome by lust, the individual loses morality (*Sīla*), shame (*Hiri*), and dread of consequences (*Ottappa*). This leads to committing adultery and other immoral sexual acts. Such acts lead to both personal and social problems. Worst are the dangers to physical health, such as contagious diseases, especially HIV. The most profound social problems are family problems including quarrels with one's spouse that can lead to a broken home and separation. Even worse are the effects on the children, which cause major social problems in the future such as children born out-of-wedlock. The children suffer severe psychological problems and may grow up as disobedient delinquents following the parent's example. This is very much what we see in our present social reality.

Verbal misbehavior includes lying, deceitfulness, dishonesty and double-dealing. In the present lifetime, it causes one to earn a reputation as unreliable, resulting in fewer and fewer good friends, close colleagues, and loving partners, in both work and social life. Due to lack of trust, one will miss out on promotions and remain in the lower classes of society with dishonor. After death, one will be reborn into hell for a very long time. When eventually returning to the human world, such beings have a very, very bad smelling mouth. Verbal misbehavior also includes

spreading wrong teachings which lead people astray. This can result in rebirth in the acid ocean of Lokantara Hell outside the universe.

Humans who practice the ten Saradhamma essential for this worldly level – refraining from killing, stealing, sexual misbehavior, lying, harsh language, divisive speech, useless speech, greed, hatred and delusion – can progress on to higher levels, if they also treat others with loving kindness and compassion, practice Right occupations and generously sacrifice in donating to help the poor or needy, and are satisfied with their own spouse, always remaining careful and faithful in sexual affairs, and diligently employ Right speech that is true, polite, unifying and useful, and develop and control their minds to lower greed hatred and delusion.

Question 4: What can you tell us about higher-level Essential Virtues or *Sāradhamma* for Celestial and Brahman Beings?

Answer 4: After excelling in the ten human-level *Sāradhamma* practices, one attains two more virtues – moral shame (*Hiri*) and moral dread (*Ottappa*). Moral shame means shying away from bad behavior as reprehensible and dangerous. Moral dread is alarmed terror regarding doing evil, based on recognition of the horrific future consequences. These are angel-level Saradhamma. Beyond this, further practice develops the Divine Abode or *Brahma-*

*vihāra* Virtues of Loving Kindness (*Mettā*), Compassion (*Karuṇā*), Sympathetic Joy (*Muditā*) and Equanimity (*Upekkhā*). The mind then becomes peaceful in *Samādhi* in either the Pure Form or Formless jhana. This is Brahman-level *Sāradhamma*. This gives great pleasure, but, is only temporary, worldly experience of these states. Whenever one ceases to do good and returns to doing evil, one immediately falls back. Thus Lord Buddha taught that: “Anyone who wishes to make merit must do so often and take satisfaction in making merit, for appreciating merit will bring happiness” [Khudakanikaya, 25/19/30].

Question 5: Finally, what about Essential Virtues or *Sāradhamma* at the transcendental level?

Answer 5: Worldly beings may gain the mundane treasures of riches, status, health, fame and happiness, but when they behave badly, these benefits are quickly lost. They soon fall back into struggles and suffering. Worldly treasures do not last. They are impermanent, essentially suffering and ultimately non-self. They are not the real Essential Virtues or *Sāradhamma*. They are, however, the foundation for higher practice.

Transcendental treasures are the True, ultimate Essential Virtues or *Sāradhamma*. The practitioner trains body, speech and mind to attain the highest level of the Ten Perfections in generosity, morality, renunciation, wisdom,

effort, patience, truthfulness, resolution, loving kindness and equanimity. There are three Higher Training Practices: Training in Higher Morality (*Adhisīla-sikkhā*), Training in Higher Mentality (*Adhicitta-sikkhā*), and Training in Higher Wisdom (*Adhipaññā-sikkhā*). These practices lead to the beginning of the transcendental path (*Paṭhama-magga*) and on to the Path Mentality (*Magga-citta*) and Path Wisdom (*Magga-paññā*) detailed in the Transcendental Eightfold Path to develop the wisdom to penetrate ultimate reality and attain the four transcendent paths, four transcendent fruits, and the ultimate goal of Nirvana. These are the true, ultimate Essential Virtues or Real Saradhamma.

Question 6: Thank you very, very much, Dr. Phra Rajyanvisith. We deeply appreciate your profound wisdom regarding these crucial issues. Now, could you please lead us in a few moments of meditation.

[Please see meditation practice on Chapter 7 page 65.]





## **THE BUDDHIST WAY OF LIFE IS DIFFICULT**

*07 March 2010*

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Question 1: Good morning and welcome Venerable Dr. Phra Rajyanvisith. This is our 33<sup>rd</sup> consecutive broadcast and we look forward to more of your inspiring wisdom. First, however, could you please briefly describe Magha Puja, the major Buddhist holiday that we have just celebrated.

Answer 1: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. It's nice to be back with you again. Magha Puja is one of the four major Buddhist holidays. It falls on the full moon day of the third lunar month, called Magha. We celebrated it last Sunday. Magha Puja commemorates four simultaneous auspicious events that occurred at Veluvana Bamboo Grove nine months after Lord Buddha's enlightenment. First, 1,250 disciples of the Buddha arrived to pay respect simultaneously from various locations without any prior appoint-

ment. Second, all of them were enlightened Arahants. Third, all had been ordained personally by Lord Buddha. And, fourth, this all occurred on the full-moon day. On that day, Lord Buddha spoke his famous *Ovādapāṭimokkha*, the 'Heart of Buddhism,' which summarized all His teachings in three exhortations: Avoid evil; Do good; and Purify your mind!

We celebrate Magha Puja by observing extra precepts, listening to Dhamma, practicing meditation, making merit through donations, and performing a wian tian by chanting while holding flowers, incense and a candle and walking meditatively clockwise three times around the Buddha statues and Buddha relics.

Question 2: Now, Venerable sir, could you please review briefly what we discussed last time.

Answer 2: Last time we considered Essential Dhamma for fruitful living called *Sāradhamma*. Practical, human-level virtues that lead to direct benefits here and now are the ten key practices embodied in the Five Precepts: Refraining from killing, stealing and sexual misbehavior; lying, harsh language, divisive speech, and useless speech such as gossip, and refraining from greed, hatred and delusion. At the Celestial level, *Sāradhamma* includes also moral shame (*Hiri*) and moral dread (*Ottappa*). At the Brahman level, one adds the Divine Abode or *Brahma-vihāra*

Virtues of Loving Kindness (*Mettā*), Compassion (*Karuṇā*), Sympathetic Joy (*Muditā*) and Equanimity (*Upekkhā*).

Transcendental treasures are the True, ultimate Saradhamma. The practitioner trains the body, speech and mind to the highest level of the Ten Perfections in generosity, morality, renunciation, wisdom, effort, patience, truthfulness, resolution, loving kindness and equanimity. There are three Higher Training Practices: Training in Higher Morality (*Adhisīla-sikkhā*), Training in Higher Mentality (*Adhicitta-sikkhā*), and Training in Higher Wisdom (*Adhipaññā-sikkhā*). These practices lead to the transcendental path to develop the wisdom to penetrate ultimate reality and attain the four transcendent paths, four transcendent fruits, and the ultimate goal of Nirvana. These are the true, ultimate Essential Virtues or Real *Sāradhamma*.

Question 3: Thank you very much, venerable Dr. Phra Rajyanvisith. Now, sir, what will we study today?

Answer 3: Today we reflect that the Buddhist way of life is difficult. Lord Buddha cited four major difficulties to be overcome.

*Kiccho manussappatilābho*  
*Kicchaṃ maccānajīvitāṃ*  
*Kicchaṃ saddhammassavanāṃ*  
*Kiccho buddhānamuppādoti*

[Khuddhakkhanikaya, 25/24/39.]



Getting reborn as a human is difficult. Maintaining human life is difficult. Getting to hear true Dhamma is difficult. Becoming a Buddha is difficult.

Getting reborn as a human being is not easy. In the *Anguttaranikaya*, Lord Buddha said that “Only a few of those who die from the human condition will get reborn as humans; more will be reborn in hell or the animal kingdom or as hungry ghosts” [Ang. 1: 20/206/48]. This is because most humans don’t know what is right and wrong. Very few study Lord Buddha’s Right Practice. Many get confused and behave contrary to the Dhamma and precepts.

The few who attain rebirth in the happy realms earn their way in accordance with the Law of Karma. These fortunate humans win their happy reward by observing the ten types of virtuous conduct cited above.

Question 4: Thank you, venerable Sir. Now, could you please tell us why maintaining human life is seen as difficult.

Answer 4: The second difficulty cited notes that just preserving life is a heavy burden for humans and all other beings. The myriad physical and mental parts require constant care. One must continually protect and maintain them, warding off heat and cold and forever filling or emptying

the body with food or liquid. The body demands require constant vigil throughout every month of every year. They can never be neglected or the body will become unusable.

Lord Buddha said that the body is really a house of disease in which pain and discomfort wander aimlessly. For example, one may experience aching of the eyes, ears, or nose, or feel a cold, cough, fever, or headache. Such diseases are inside, but external threats are even more numerous. Perils such as weapons, poisons, fire, or flood abound. And, one can be attacked by bandits, snakes, or wild animals. There are endless external threats to life. Taken together, internal and external dangers require constant vigilance. Maintaining life entails enormous effort on a continual basis. Even so, one can only maintain life for 70-80 years or 100 years at most.

The Buddhist way of life requires even more alert mindfulness, continually examining every action, speech or thought against the ‘Manussa-dhamma’ standard. ‘Manussa-dhamma’ means Human Dhamma. It is observance of the Five Precepts and their five positive counterparts. In addition, six human virtues establish the foundation for transcendent supra-mundane virtues. They are mindfulness, discrimination, control of the senses, moderation in eating, honesty, and restraint in speech.

Question 5: Thank you, very much, Dr. Phra Rajyanvisith. Now, what can you tell us about the third difficulty with fulfilling the Buddhist way of life – that getting to hear true Dhamma is difficult?

Answer 5: Discovering and hearing the true Dhamma from noble monks is difficult. Such monks are rare and humans are bathed in darkness and ignorance, unable to comprehend the noble truth and what is good and evil or what is right and wrong in accordance with the absolute Truth of ultimate wisdom. One tends to fall under worldly influences full of defilements, craving, and attachments that almost always pull one away from the true Dhamma to end up far from proper merit-making such as generosity, morality and meditation.

The highest and truest Dhamma teachings are most clearly, validly and reliably attained by studying what Lord Buddha realized on Enlightenment Night. After six years of meditation preparation, the Bodhisatta, sat down under the Bodhi Tree and resolved not to get up until he achieved enlightenment. He, then, applied the scientific method in its highest form, beyond what we consider scientific today. Like a scientist, he was researching the truth about nature, but did not flinch at asking life's most crucial questions. He tuned his mind to become a refined instrument for objective observation, developing super-normal abilities to make it into a highly effective and efficient instrument. Thus, he

collected the necessary and sufficient reliable, valid, and relevant data. He then analyzed these data to achieve enlightenment throughout the three watches of the night.

In the first watch, Lord Buddha concentrated his mind up to the fourth Jhana absorption to remove all hindrances. His mind became so pure that he could recall uncountable past lives of both himself and others. He could see all world beings: human, animal, ghosts, demons, celestial, Brahman, and Formless Brahman beings. He saw that all were continually dying and then getting reborn immediately in endless re-incarnation.

Most were reborn into the suffering worlds as animals, hungry ghosts, demons, or hell beings. Very few were reborn in the happy worlds – The Human World, Celestial World, Brahman World, or Formless Brahman World. This caused him to feel compassion for all beings.

During the second watch, Lord Buddha was eager to learn what caused beings to be reborn in suffering or happy worlds. He again meditated to the fourth Jhana absorption to purify his mind, and then he made the wish to follow individual beings from the past through the present and into the future. This enabled him to see the cause and effect of past actions on rebirth.

He discovered five major causes of rebirth into the suffering worlds: Intentional killing, theft, adultery, lying,

and addiction to intoxicants. Immoral actions were the main cause of rebirth into the suffering worlds.

Lord Buddha saw all the Hell beings. This universe includes many beings we can't see or hear with our human senses. Lord Buddha could also see the refined beings existing in this universe that ordinary human beings cannot see. He developed supernatural vision, hearing, and touching which enabled him to see. He saw the whole universe. The human world is just one little part of it. The universe has three levels. The first is the Sensual World. The second is the Form Brahman World. And, the third is the Formless Brahman World.

In conclusion, during the Second Watch, Lord Buddha learned that world beings are reborn in accordance with their behavior – the Law of Karma. That is, he saw how the actions of the past influence the present and the future.

During the Third Watch, Lord Buddha analyzed in detail of the root cause of suffering and found that it was ignorance. Ignorance means no knowledge of the past, no knowledge of the future, and no knowledge of cause and effect from the past into the present and future. Ignorance also means no knowledge of the root cause of suffering, the Four Noble Truths or Dependent Origination. But, when we practice meditation we can see the true Dhamma just as Lord Buddha did. We can even experience the supreme peace and happiness of Nirvana temporarily.

Lord Buddha saw the cosmology of countless universes and the dreadful Lokantara Hell outside the universes, reserved for those who do evil based on false beliefs such as those who kill others with the belief that this will bring them to a happy state close to god.

Finally, Lord Buddha's true Dhamma analyzes Dependent Origination, clarifying the causes of suffering and identifying ignorance as the root cause. This ignorance causes world beings to have Wrong View leading to misconduct such as violating the five precepts or even the Highway to Hell (bar hopping with free reign to sexual feelings and intoxication) leading to disaster sooner or later. In conclusion, during the Third Watch Lord Buddha analyzed the root cause of suffering as ignorance and sought to overcome this by teaching the Four Noble Truths, including the specific guidelines of the Eightfold Path for leading one's life so as to eliminate suffering completely, including removing its causes, thereby maximizing happiness up to supreme happiness.

Question 6: Finally, what can you tell us about the last item, that becoming a Buddha is difficult?

Answer 6: Becoming a Buddha is very, very difficult. That is why Buddhas are so rare. Lord Buddha defined one "Mahā-kappa" or "Eon" as the time from one "Big Bang" to the next – one complete cycle in which a cosmos is born,

exists, disintegrates, and then lies dormant until it is born again. Lord Buddha also introduced the coefficient  $10^{140}$  [ten to the one hundred fortieth power] called “Asangkheyya” or “countless.” For a Buddha, time is measured with such giant meter sticks. Our Lord Buddha Gotama took 20 Asangkheyya-Kappa to become a Buddha – 7 for preparation, 9 after overtly stating his goal, and 4 for completing the 10 perfections at three levels.

Question 7: Thank you very much, Dr. Phra Rajyanvisith. We deeply appreciate your profound wisdom regarding these crucial issues. Now, could you please lead us in a few moments of meditation.

[Please see meditation practice on Chapter 7 page 65.]



## **AVOID FOOLS - SEEK THE WISE**

*04 April 2010*

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Question 1: Dr. Phra Rajyanvisith (Hon. D.), welcome Venerable sir. Today is our 34<sup>th</sup> consecutive broadcast. Our loyal audience awaits more of your astute insights. First, however, please summarize what we covered last time.

Answer 1: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Last time we reflected that the Buddhist way of life is difficult. First, it is difficult to be reborn as a human being. Second, just plain staying alive is difficult. Third, getting to hear the true Dhamma is difficult. And finally, becoming a Buddha is extremely difficult.

Most humans get reborn into the suffering worlds because they don't know right from wrong. A few are reborn in happy realms due to clear comprehension and mindfulness. Second, just preserving life is a heavy burden. The physical body conveys incessant demands that require constant attention every second of every day. The body is just a



house of disease in which pain and discomfort wander aimlessly. There are also endless external threats to life such as fire, flood, beasts, or robbers. Not only humans, but all beings are continually engaged in this paramount effort to just stay alive.

Hearing the True Dhamma is also very difficult. On Enlightenment Night, Lord Buddha applied the scientific method in its highest form. First, He recalled uncountable past lives of world beings, seeing all potential realms of rebirth. He saw that beings are continually dying and immediately reborn in endless re-incarnation. He felt deep compassion. Second, Lord Buddha followed individual beings from the past into the present and future. This enabled him to see the Law of Karma. He discovered five major causes of rebirth in the suffering worlds: killing, theft, adultery, lying, and addiction to intoxicants.

Third, Lord Buddha identified the root cause of suffering as ignorance of the past, future, Law of Karma, Four Noble Truths and Dependent Origination. Hearing and understanding such True Dhamma taught by the wise is very difficult, but we each have the capability to meditate and see this True Dhamma for ourselves.

Finally, last time we emphasized how extremely difficult it is to become a Buddha. Lord Buddha Gotama took 20 Asangkheyya-kappa to become a Buddha. This means that it took Lord Buddha Gotama  $20 \times 10^{140}$  (twenty times ten to

the 140<sup>th</sup> power) cosmic eons to become a Buddha, where a cosmic eon or Kappa is the time from one ‘Big Bang’ to the next – one complete cycle in which a cosmos is born, exists, disintegrates and then lies dormant without matter until it is born again.

Question 2: Thank you very much, Dr. Phra Rajyanvisith (Hon.D). That was profound. Now, what will we study today?

Answer 2: Today we focus on Lord Buddha’s advice to avoid fools and seek out the wise. This is the opening verse in the popular Maṅgala Sutta, which outlines the most important lessons for life. A senior angel asked Lord Buddha to identify life’s greatest lucky charms. Lord Buddha responded with the Maṅgala Sutta. The genius of his response was recognizing that good fortune derives not from good luck, but from appropriate behavior based on Right Wisdom. The first verse is:

*Asevanā ca bālānaṃ      Paṇḍitānañca sevanā,  
Pūjā ca pūjanīyānaṃ      Etammaṅgalamuttamaṃ*

Avoid fools, seek the wise,  
honor the worthy.  
This is most auspicious.

Question 3: Where did this idea originally come from?

Answer 3: In a previous lifetime, long before his enlightenment, Lord Buddha was an austere hermit named Akitta and Celestial King Sakka offered him the granting of any wish. He wished:

Oh. King Sakka, I do not want to see a fool. I do not want to hear the speech of any fool. I do not want to associate with any fool. I do not want to speak with a fool. A fool can lead one to do evil deeds. A fool becomes angry even though others speak kindly to him. Nobody can guess his attitude. He observes no precepts. It is not auspicious to see a fool.

Question 4: What, exactly, is the definition of a ‘fool’?

Answer 4: The word “fool” includes both those who wander uselessly, not knowing right from wrong, and those who behave overtly wickedly based on erroneous beliefs. Most ‘fools’ simply do not know what is right and what is wrong. Their naïve inexperience just naturally leads to wrong intentions resulting in inappropriate speech and action.

Other ‘fools’ exhibit more overtly dangerous misbehavior based on Wrong View and Wrong Thought. Lord Buddha’s cousin Devadatta provides a vivid example. Devadatta wanted to take over. He proposed five demands

to Lord Buddha, that: All monks should live in the forest, go on the alms round, wear only rag robes, live under a tree, and eat only vegetarian food. When Lord Buddha did not accept, Devadatta urged other disciples to follow him and about 500 monks did. This illustrates the most extreme type of ‘fool.’ Lord Buddha advises avoiding both naïve and wicked fools.

Question 5: Why is associating with fools dangerous?

Answer 5: Associating with fools is dangerous because their speech and action are based on ignorant or malevolent misconceptions. All phenomena have mind as their chief; they are all mind-wrought.

A person with wrong intentions will repeatedly undertake inappropriate actions, speech and occupational initiatives which will inevitably result in difficulties, problems, misfortune, or suffering.

The untrained mind is continually deceived by three root passions – greed, hatred, and delusion. Greed is the insatiable, ravenous, selfish hunger, lust and longing for things. It arises when the sense organs are unrestrained. Hatred is just the opposite of greed. It is the abhorrence, loathing, detestation, and revulsion for things disliked. Delusion is not knowing the proper action in the present situation to stay on the Right Path to a happy future. It results in lack of mindfulness and careless behavior.

These passions lead to wrong intentions resulting in improper speech and action. Fools display four kinds of improper speech: first, lying and deception; second harsh, rude, or abusive speech such as shouting; third, agitation to break up group unity such as tale-bearing; and fourth, damaging speech such as wrong advice or useless gossip.

Fools perform four immoral actions: Intentionally killing living beings, theft or corruption, adultery or immoral sex, and addiction to intoxicants. Any killing has harmful effects. Second is theft, corruption or cheating. Third is committing adultery or performing immoral sexual acts. Finally, addiction to intoxicants brings immediate disastrous consequences apparent directly as physical and mental disabilities as well as catastrophic social consequences such as loss of employment, marital separation, divorce, and homelessness.

Because of their wrong actions, speech and thoughts, fools meet with continual obstacles and problems. Dangers and accidents are always imminent. These difficulties can engulf both the fools and their associates. As Lord Buddha said [Lakkhaṇa Sutta, Anguttaranikaya, Tikaniṭṭā 41-42]:

Bikkhus, if any danger arises it is entirely due to a fool. There is no way that it could arise from a wise man. Any accident that occurs must be due to a fool. Bikkhus, if any obstacle arises it is entirely due to a fool. There is no

way that it could arise from a wise man. Any obstacle that occurs must be due to a fool.

Bikkhus, the fool has his own personal danger ahead. A wise man never has personal danger ahead. A fool has accidents. A wise man will never have an accident. A fool has obstacles. A wise man never has obstacles. Thus, there is no danger for wise men. There are no accidents for wise men. There are no obstacles for wise men.

In conclusion, associating with fools is dangerous both because they may lead you astray and because you may get caught up in their bad karmic results.

Question 6: Thank you very much, venerable sir. Now, who are the wise and how is associating with them beneficial?

Answer 6: The Pāli word for a wise man is pundit. It means a scholar, learned man or teacher. In the Buddhist context, this means one who knows and follows the Buddha's teachings with wisdom, mindfulness and diligence, never being careless.

None of the problems cited above afflict the wise man. Pundits know right from wrong and observe the precepts carefully. They don't make mistakes, always thinking, speaking and acting advantageously. Also, they always give only good advice. Thus, pundits and their associates

lead peacefully happy lives free from dangers, accidents and obstacles. This should be considered a supreme blessing.

Pundits have controlled the passions of greed, hatred or delusion. Instead, they foster the virtues of generosity, loving-kindness and lucid wisdom. Pundits monitor their sense doors to master lust, longing, craving and maintain distance from the violent passions of anger, hatred, jealousy and revulsion. Because they are learned scholars, pundits also see through the smoke screen obscuring the distinction between right and wrong. They practice the loving-kindness (*Mettā*), compassion (*Karuṇā*), Sympathetic Joy (*Muditā*) and Equanimity (*Upekkhā*) of the Divine Abode (*Brahma-vihāra*).

Pundits live mindfully and carefully applying their knowledge every second of every day. They speak and act with clear-sighted, wholesome intentions. They are honest both with themselves and others, speaking truthfully without any hint of deceit. At the same time, their speech is sweet, pleasant, enjoyable and supportive, fostering group unity and good feelings with each colleague.

Wise men carefully observe the precepts to avoid defilements and actively pursue the positive opposites. Abstaining from killing, they treat all living beings with helpful loving-kindness and mercy. This facilitates winning good friends, developing warm relationships, and living peace-

fully, free from enemies. Avoiding theft, they exhibit exceptional goodness, generosity and honesty, through acts like donating property and sharing Dhamma or other useful knowledge and sacrificing one's time or foregoing one's own happiness to help others. Staying ever faithful to their partner, pundits carefully control sexual feelings and activity. Finally, pundits also practice sobriety, avoiding alcohol and drugs to maintain alert, clear, bright consciousness and mindfulness.

In addition, pundits carefully practice Right Livelihood, refraining from five immoral vocations: trading in human beings as in slavery or prostitution; trading in weapons; trading in flesh such as raising animals for food; trading in intoxicants such as alcohol and narcotics; and trading in poisons. In addition, pundits avoid dishonest practices such as smuggling or tax fraud and even legitimate commerce which employs deception. Finally, pundits also avoid all businesses linked to the Highway to Hell or Road to Ruin such as night clubs or gambling casinos which lure humans into drunken debauchery.

In conclusion, associating with the wise guarantees immersion in a positive environment providing beneficial influences as well as potential opportunities for learning, collaboration and support with upright, learned scholars for both oneself and one's family. It opens the opportunity to learn both from their example and from their teachings.



As Lord Buddha taught, we should avoid fools and seek out the wise. We must also look for the pundit within ourselves. This is most auspicious.

Question 7: Thank you again, Venerable Sir. Now, could you please lead us in a few moments of meditation.

[Please see meditation practice on Chapter 7 page 65.]



## **ONLY LOVING-KINDNESS CONQUERS HATRED**

*02 May 2010*

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Question 1: Welcome Venerable Dr. Phra Rajyanvisith (Hon. D.). This is our 35<sup>th</sup> consecutive broadcast. We eagerly await more of your profound wisdom. First, however, please summarize our last broadcast.

Answer 1: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Last time we focused on Lord Buddha's opening advice in the Maṅgala Sutta to avoid fools and seek out the wise. An angel asked Lord Buddha for life's greatest lucky charms, but Lord Buddha recognized that good fortune derives from appropriate behavior based on Right Wisdom. His first counsel was to avoid fools – including both those who wander uselessly, not knowing right from wrong, and those who behave overtly wickedly based on erroneous beliefs, such as Lord Buddha's cousin Devadatta who first tried to take over and later tried to kill Lord Buddha.

Associating with fools is dangerous because their speech and action are based on ignorance or malevolent misconceptions. One with wrong intentions will repeatedly undertake inappropriate actions, speech and occupational initiatives which inevitably bring resultant karma filled with difficulties, misfortune, and suffering. The untrained mind is continually deceived by the three root passions of greed, hatred, and delusion. Delusion results in lack of mindfulness and careless behavior. All three passions lead to wrong intentions resulting in improper speech and action. These, in turn, bring harmful resultant karma. Fools meet with continual obstacles and problems. Dangers and accidents are always imminent. And, these difficulties can engulf both the fools and their associates. Thus, it is wise to avoid associating with fools.

Question 2: Thank you very much, Reverend Sir. Now, what will we study today?

Answer 2: Today, we shall reflect on the importance of loving-kindness in quelling hatred. Loving-kindness and forgiveness are the key for restoring and developing faith, wisdom, perfection and moral action for our public community as a whole and for all who are listening today. As spoken at Jetavana Vihara and recorded in the Khuddakavagga and Dhammapadam, Lord Buddha taught:

*Na hi verena verāni                      Sammantīdha kudācanaṃ*  
*Averena ca sammanti                    Esa Dhammo sanatanoṭi*

[Khutthakanikaya 25/11/15, Dhammapada 1/4]

Hatreds never cease through hatred in this world. Only through loving-kindness. This is an eternal Truth.

Question 3: Thank you, Venerable Sir. Could you please tell us the story behind this teaching?

Answer 3: This teaching derives from a fascinating story of a blood feud that continued over successive lifetimes. The story is called the “The Bitter Feud through Various Existences of Kala Yakkhini.” It can be found in the Dhammapada, Chapter 1, Number 4.

In Buddha’s time, there was a family living in his region where the father had died and the son resolved not to marry in order to take care of his mother. But, the mother wanted a grandson to carry on the family, so she convinced the son to let her find him a wife. Over the years, however, the wife never gave birth. So, the mother found him a second wife. The first wife was really upset, but pretended to be happy.

The second wife proved very fertile. Twice, the first wife fed the second wife medicine to induce an abortion, as soon as she knew that the second wife was pregnant. The

third time, the second wife did not tell the first wife, but when she found out, the first wife again induced an abortion. Eventually, the second wife died in childbirth. Before her death, filled with hatred, the second wife vowed vengeance on the first wife and her future offspring. This was the beginning of the feud. The husband found out what the first wife had done and killed her.

Question 4: Wow! What happened after that?

Answer 4: In their following lifetimes, the second wife was born as a cat in that same family, and the first wife was born as a hen. Whenever the hen laid eggs or had baby chicks, the cat would eat them. The hen vowed vengeance, saying in the next lifetime I will kill you and your offspring. In the end, the cat also killed the hen.

In their next lifetimes, the second wife or cat was reborn as a doe and the first wife or hen was reborn as a leopard. Whenever the deer gave birth, the leopard would eat the child. Eventually, the leopard also ate the doe. Before dying, the deer vowed that in the next lifetime I will kill all of your offspring.

In their next lifetimes, the first wife or hen and leopard was reborn as the daughter of a nobleman in Savatthi and the second wife or cat and doe was reborn nearby as an ogress named Kala Yakkhini. Every time the lady bore a son, the ogress would eat the baby. One day, while carrying the baby,

the lady recognized the ogress in human disguise chasing them in hot pursuit. Knowing that Lord Buddha was giving a sermon nearby in Jetavana monastery, the lady and her husband rushed there. The lady broke through the crowd and laid her child at Buddha's feet for protection.

Question 5: Did the ogress follow them there?

Answer 5: Yes, the yakkhini followed, but the celestial guardian at the gate stopped her. First, the lady told Lord Buddha her story. Then, Lord Buddha called the ogress to come in too, and told both of them about their bitter feud which had continued over several lifetimes, harbouring hatred and killing each other's offspring. They were made to see that hatred only causes more hatred. It can only cease through loving-kindness, forgiveness, friendship, understanding, and good will. Both realised their mistakes, and, on the admonition of Lord Buddha, made their peace with each other.

Then, Lord Buddha requested the lady to hand over her son to the ogress. Fearing for the safety of her son, she hesitated. But, because of her devotion and confidence in the enlightened one, she finally handed over her son as directed. The son was warmly received by the Yakkhini. After kissing and caressing the child tenderly like her very own son, the ogress handed over the child back to his mother.

As a result of this episode, there was much goodwill on both sides.

Lord Buddha concluded with the verse that we cited at the beginning:

*Na hi verena verāni                      Sammantīdha kudācanam*  
*Averena ca sammanti                    Esa Dhammo sanatanoti*

[Khutthakanikaya 25/11/15, Dhammapada 1/4]

Hatreds never cease through hatred in this world. Only through loving-kindness. This is an eternal Truth.

Question 6: Wow! That’s quite a story, Dr. Phra Rajyanvisith (Hon. D.). Loving-kindness conquers all! What are the practical lessons that we should take away with us?

Answer 6: The story highlights four ultimate Truths about the natural situation in which we find ourselves which are very difficult to comprehend – especially for those engulfed in modern consumer culture. The first is the Truth of rebirth – the fact that we are all continually reborn over and over again and that this rebirth is due to defilements, ignorance, craving and attachment. We are each engrossed in “unfinished business” from the past, but with such limited and distorted vision that we continually create new “Karma or kamma” – that is, new work for the future.

Second, the account indicates that one can be reborn as an animal or even as a being such as an ogre, ghost or demon, commonly considered “mythical” or “superstitious.” The Truth is that the universe is much more vast than the human eye or mind can comprehend.

Third, the story features the dangers of vengeance or revenge, demonstrating vividly how we can bind ourselves perpetually into destructive modes of behavior, causing difficulties for each other.

Fourth, the main point of the narrative is to show that hatred can be overcome with loving-kindness and forgiveness. This is the key message that we should carry away with us.

In a relevant commentary, Phra Tissa Thera says, “The grudge of one who loses himself in anger thinking ‘They cursed us, cheated us, stole from us, beat us and conquered us’ cannot be calmed, but the resentment of one who does not lose himself in anger can be pacified.” He, then, suggests four techniques for avoiding being overpowered by anger. First, just don’t think about it; don’t keep remembering the past. Second, just recognize that it happened in the past and let go of it, starting fresh in the present. Third, develop your own loving-kindness for all sentient beings based on mutual understanding. This can be done with *Mettā* or Loving-kindness Meditation and can lead one to blissful enjoyment of each passing moment in life. Fourth, one can



develop one's level of patience or endurance to be able to put up with aggravation without responding. In Pāli this means developing Khanti which can be strengthened with continual mindful practice in "keeping one's cool." All four techniques are sound advice, very useful for our political warriors in Bangkok as well as for each one of us.

Lord Buddha compares retribution with trying to clean a filthy floor that is stained with contaminated pollutants such as spit, snot, feces, and urine by just rinsing it with dirty water. It can never become spotless in this way. Only by responding to hatred with pure loving-kindness, compassion, sympathy, forgiveness and patient endurance completely devoid of anger, ill will, blame, and grudges can one wash the vengeance clean. Perhaps if our warring political parties washed and purified their red and yellow shirts together they might come out a peaceful orange, like a monk's robe.

Question 7: Thank you very much, Dr. Phra Rajyanvisith for your insightful teaching and advice. Now, please lead us in a few moments of meditation.

[Please see meditation practice on Chapter 7 page 65.]



**GRATITUDE, VIRTUE & DEMOCRACY:  
APPRECIATING AND RESCUING  
THE MOTHERLAND**

*06 June 2010*

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Question 1: Greetings Venerable Dr. Phra Rajyanvisith (Hon. D.). Today is our 36<sup>th</sup> uninterrupted program, concluding three years. We earnestly anticipate further insights. First, however, please review our previous broadcast.

Answer 1: Good morning listeners and welcome back. Last time we reflected on the importance of *Mettā* or loving-kindness in conquering hatred. Lord Buddha taught that conflicts are never terminated through hatred, but only with loving-kindness and forgiveness. This is the way to restore progress, development, moral conduct, faith and wisdom, both for each of us as individuals and for our violence-torn nation as a whole. We retold the story of the ogress Kala Yakkhini in which two wives feuded across multiple

lifetimes as various beings, killing each other's offspring, until Lord Buddha brought them to realize their destructive behavior and replace their hatred with loving-kindness. Both realised their mistakes and made peace. Then, Lord Buddha requested the lady to hand over her son to the ogress. She finally did as directed. After kissing the child tenderly, the ogress handed the child back, and much goodwill was generated on both sides. Lord Buddha concluded with the verse that "Hatreds never cease through hatred in this world. Only through loving-kindness. This is an eternal Truth."

Question 2: Thank you very much, Dr. Phra Rajyanvisith. Now, what is today's topic?

Answer 2: Today, we shall reflect on the importance of gratitude. In particular, we focus on our obligation to appreciate the bountiful sustenance of our motherland and to respond with appreciative reciprocity. We begin with a brief proverb from Somdej Phra Sangharaja Pussadeva: *Nimittā sādthurūpānaṃ kataññūkataveditā* - The true emblem of the praise-worthy is gratitude and reciprocity.

The Pāli word for Gratitude is *Kataññū*. It means, first, recognizing that one has been the recipient of valuable help from a benefactor and, second, feeling thankful for the kindness. *Kataññū* is usually paired with *Katavedī* which means expressing this feeling through words and deeds. Lord Buddha identified two types of people who are

very hard to find in this stingy world. First is the initial benefactor (*Pubbakāri*) who selflessly volunteers to help those in need. But, even harder to find is the recipient who recognizes his debt to the benefactor's kindness and does something to try to repay it (*Kataññū-katavedī*).

The person endowed with gratitude exhibits faithfulness, integrity, and nobility. Lord Buddha considered Gratitude an extremely important component of mental training. At one point Lord Buddha said that four things were necessary for entry into Heaven: Right Action, Right Speech, Right Thought, and Gratitude. Like humility and modesty, appreciation, thankfulness and gratitude are powerful virtues for overcoming the natural tendencies towards greediness, stinginess, arrogance, conceit and egotism. They lead to recognition of our interconnectedness; appreciating how the foundation of knowledge stored in our country's social and cultural heritage and the efforts of our parents, teachers and friends have all contributed to our own successes.

Lord Buddha praised gratitude as the highest sign of perfection. It is the good conduct that leads the practitioner only in the direction of progress and peaceful happiness. If more and more Thai citizens recognize their debt to the nation and respond with gratitude, the nation and its citizens will prosper and find peaceful happiness. However, if citizens behave improperly, without gratitude, and cause trouble, the country will suffer increasing disunity and dis-

turbances. We have all heard the national anthem over the radio and TV at 8:00 AM and 6:00 PM. It says, in part: “Thailand unites the flesh and blood of Thai citizens into the Thai nation. Every single piece is Thai. The nation can endure as long as all Thais remain united.” This is intended to remind Thai citizens to live together in peaceful harmony without ill will. At present, however, the country has fallen into severe disunity which has impaired social, political and economic development and threatens to tear the nation apart. Despite the best efforts of many advisors who love their country, considerable time has passed with no improvement.

Question 3: Thank you, Venerable Sir. Now, how does this relate to our current political crisis in Thailand? Can Buddhism contribute to a solution?

Answer 3: Yes, Buddhism has significant strategic advice to offer if the politicians will listen. If all sides really want the problem solved, this advice can help, but if they don't really want a solution, it won't do any good. The main reason for the continuing conflict is that no one has attacked the underlying problem. If we consider the cause of the cause back to the root cause of the problem and then work together to find a solution, we can succeed. But, it requires cooperation and willingness to bear the pain. Curing a toothache often requires extraction.

Lord Buddha's most pertinent advice is given at the very beginning of the Maṅgala Sutta:

*Asevanā ca bālānaṃ Paṇḍitānañca sevā,*  
*Pūjā ca pūjanīyānaṃ Etammaṅgalamuttamaṃ*

Avoid fools, seek the wise,  
 honor the worthy.  
 This is most auspicious.

Fools are the ignorant, lacking in wisdom. Some are deluded, not knowing right from wrong. Others knowingly pursue unwholesome courses based on Wrong View. Both are driven by intentions based on the three root causes of defilement: First greed selfishness, craving and lust; or second, hatred, grudges, disputes and jealousy; or third delusion cheating and abusing power without knowing right from wrong or true from false.

None of these problems afflict the wise. Pundits know right or wrong and observe precepts and avoid improper behavior, always thinking, speaking and acting advantageously with loving-kindness and compassion. They also give only good advice. Thus, they and their associates lead peacefully happy lives free from problems, dangers and disasters. We should associate with the wise by seeking them out, learning from them, and modeling our behavior after them. We must look for the Pundit within ourselves as well as outside, mindfully developing our own wisdom,

judicious speech and virtuous actions while carefully controlling foolish or wicked impulses.

In our current national context, Lord Buddha's words tell us to avoid fools and elect the wise to parliament as our representatives to manage and administer the country. We can recognize both fools and the wise by their personal virtues and actions. Avoid power hungry cheaters who usurp the rights of the citizens for their own personal advantage and elect those who demonstrate justice and virtue, working for the good of the nation and all its people as a whole. Look for righteousness, integrity and uprightness first; then for intelligence and competence. With this contextual definition, Lord Buddha's words can apply to our immediate national development problems as well as to lofty personal development along the path to Nirvana.

Question 4: Wow, thank you Venerable Dr. Phra Rajyanvisith. That was extremely direct and pertinent. Now, please interpret Lord Buddha's guidance to honor the worthy.

Answer 4: In the context of our national crisis, Lord Buddha's words "Honor the worthy" mean honoring the King. We can honor the King by formalizing his legitimacy in our constitutional monarchy by detailing roles and procedures for a democratic, constitutional monarchy in a formal constitution. Thailand is a constitutional monarchy. Sovereignty stems directly from the people. Thai royal legitimacy de-

rives from consensus of the citizens. Thai citizens collectively request the King to serve as Head of State, employing the sovereign power to govern. The king then employs this power through three channels. These are the three sets of procedures which need to be developed and formalized into a mature modern legal system defined in the constitution. First, honoring the King to employ sovereign executive power through the cabinet and ministries to administer the country. Second, honoring the King to employ sovereign legislative power through Parliament to make laws. Third, honoring the King, to employ sovereign judicial power through the courts to administer justice. These powers and procedures need to be clearly spelled out in a democratic constitution formalizing the constitutional monarchy.

To implement this, when the government next holds elections for a new Parliament, the will King sign a Royal Decree authorizing the President of the National Assembly as the representative of the people empowered to make legislation. The President of the National Assembly will then draft and obtain parliamentary approval for two documents: (1) Lak Niti Raj or the Law Governing the State and (2) Lak Niti Dhamma or the Law Governing Making Changes in the Constitution. From then on, if changes are to be made in the Constitution, they must be made in accordance with this formally adopted Dhamma Law. The President of the National Assembly then selects and proposes the Prime Minister to be appointed by His Majesty the King.



These are the basic principles of democratic government. They provide the framework for specifying a formal, modern democratic constitutional monarchy as well as the legally-formulated Dhamma Law for changing the constitution and for law enforcement and administration of justice. These are the procedures that require detailing.

Being grateful to our motherland and reciprocating by electing virtuous representatives, honoring our King, and formalizing a legitimized, democratic constitutional monarchy – these are the Buddhist-based advice that can help solve our current national crisis and lead to enduring democratic government of the people, by the people and for the people.

Question 5: Thank you very much, Dr. Phra Rajyanvisith for your very direct, powerful and insightful teaching. Now, could you please lead us in a few moments of meditation.

## **Requesting Five Precepts**

Phra Rajyanvisith: Today we will begin by requesting the Five Precepts first and then continue on to meditation.

Layman: *Ahaṃ bhante viṣuṃ viṣuṃ rakkhaṇat-thāya tisaraṇena saha pañca sīlāni yācāmi,*

Venerable Sir, I ask for refuge and for the five precepts.

*Dutiyampi, ahaṃ bhante viṣuṃ viṣuṃ rakkhaṇat-thāya tisaraṇena saha pañca sīlāni yācāmi,*

For the second time, Venerable Sir, I ask for...

*Tatiyampi, ahaṃ bhante viṣuṃ viṣuṃ rakkhaṇat-thāya tisaraṇena saha pañca sīlāni yācāmi.*

For the third time, Venerable Sir, I ask for ...

Phra Rajyanvisith followed by Layman:

*Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa*

Homage to the Exalted One, the Holy One, the Perfectly  
Enlightened One.

*Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa*

*Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa*

*Buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi*

I go to the Buddha for refuge,

*Dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi*

I go to the Dhamma for refuge,

*Saṅghaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi*

I go to the Saṅgha for refuge,

*Dutiyampi, Buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi*

For the second time, ...

*Dutiyampi, Dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi*

*Dutiyampi, Saṅghaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi*

*Tatiyampi, Buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi*

For the third time, ...

*Tatiyampi, Dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi*

*Tatiyampi, Saṅghaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi*

Phra Rajyanvisith (Pāli Only) followed by Layman  
(Pāli & English)

1. *Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi.*  
I undertake the precept to refrain from destroying living creatures.
2. *Adinnādānā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi*  
I undertake the precept to refrain from taking that which is not given.
3. *Kāmesumicchācārā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ Samādiyāmi.*  
I undertake the precept to refrain from unlawful sexual activity.
4. *Musāvādā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi.*  
I undertake the precept to refrain from incorrect speech.

5. *Surāmerayamajjapamādaṭṭhānā veramaṇī.  
sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi.*

I undertake the precept to refrain from intoxicating drinks and drugs which lead to carelessness.

Phra Rajyanvisith: *Imāni Pañca Sikkhāpadāni Samādiyāmi.*

Layman: *Imāni pañca sikkhāpadāni samādiyāmi.*

I undertake to observe these Five Precepts

*Imāni pañca sikkhāpadāni samādiyāmi.*

*Imāni pañca sikkhāpadāni samādiyāmi.*

Phra Rajyanvisith: *Sīlena Sugatiṃ Yanti.*

These Precepts bring a happy life.

Layman: *Sādhu* - It is proper.

Phra Rajyanvisith: *Sīlena Bhogasampadā*

These Precepts bring prosperity

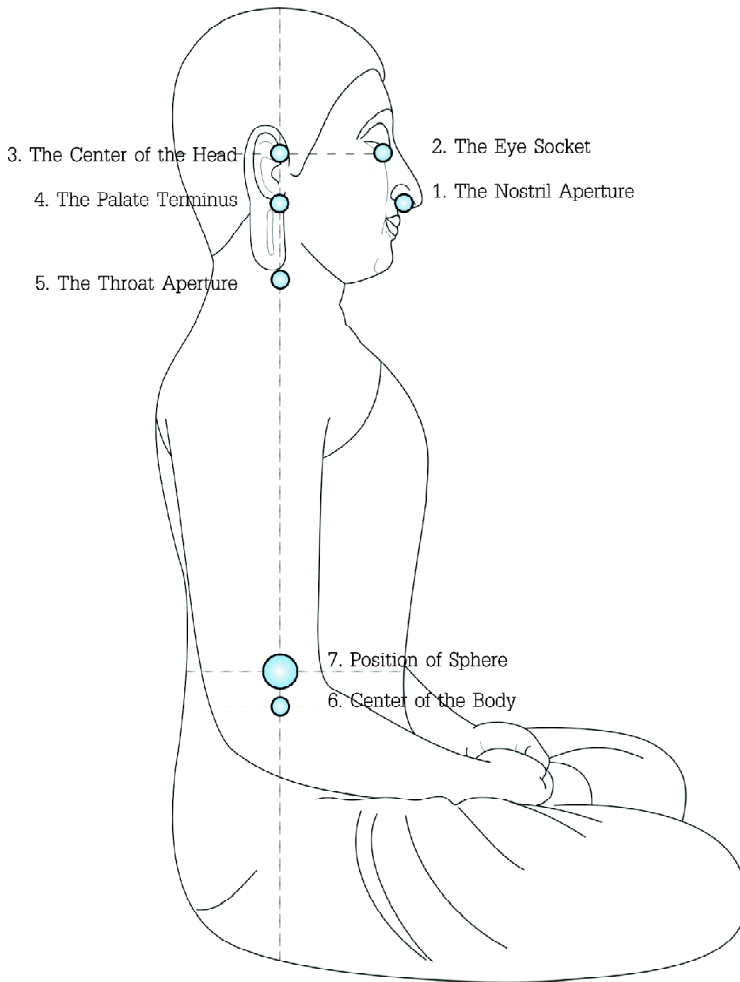
Layman: *Sādhu.*

Phra Rajyanvisith: *Sīlena Nibbutiṃ Yanti. Tassmā Sīlaṃ Visodhaye.*

All beings will attain Nirvana by *Sīla*. Thus, *Sīla* is holy [should be purified].

Layman: *Sādhu.*

Phra Rajyanvisith: Prostrate three times to the Buddha Statue, if available. Now we begin meditation.



## The Path to the Center of the Body

## Dhammakāya Meditation Practice

We sit upright in a regular meditation posture, cross-legged as seen in some Buddha images, with the right leg resting upon the left. The right hand rests on the left, palm turned upwards, with the right index finger just touching the left thumb. The body is straight and the mind is fully alert. Take a deep breath and relax the body until you feel comfortable. Close your eyelids lightly, do not press them.

We use two aids: a mantra, “*Sammā Arahang*” and an object of visualization, a bright, clear luminous sphere called *Āloka Kasiṇa* or light object. Using these aids, we draw the mind inward to the center of the body and the mind components of vision, memory, thought and awareness come together into oneness. Imagine a bright, clear, luminous sphere located at the center of the body, two inches or five centimeters above the navel. Rest your mind inside the sphere and Repeat “*Sammā Arahang, Sammā Arahang, Sammā Arahang,*” continually and mindfully. Look for the pinpoint of bright light at the center of the center. Focus your mind there. Stop Still.

When the mind stops perfectly still at the center of the center, the center expands itself and becomes a new sphere. Place your mind gently inside the new sphere. Look for the pinpoint of bright light at the center of the center. Place your mind there. Stop still. Eventually, a bright clear

sphere will arise. This is the Dhamma Sphere. Do not be overjoyed. Keep your mind calm in equanimity. Hold the mind still, and stop repeating *Sammā Arahang*. Just concentrate at the center of the Dhamma Sphere. This is your own nucleus which gives rise to this body and this mind. You should experience the greatest happiness you have ever known – not happiness based on an external object, but happiness arising from within, due to being fully pure from the Five Hindrances.

Continue meditating as before by stopping still at the center of the center of the Dhamma Sphere. When the concentration is just right, sphere after sphere pops up by itself from the center, each one inside the previous one.

The Spheres of *Sīla* or moral behavior, *Samādhi* or concentration, *Paññā* or Wisdom, *Vimutti* or transcendence, and *Vimuttiñāṇadassana* or insight appear one after the next. Enter each sphere, successively, and focus your mind still at the pinpoint of bright light or hollow spot at the center. When the mind stops still, a new sphere emerges.

When you reach the Insight Sphere, you continue in the same way, stopping still at the center. Again the center expands itself, but this time, instead of a new sphere, you see your own Refined Human Body, sitting cross-legged in meditation position, facing the same direction as you are facing. Don't be startled, just keep observing. It looks very

much like yourself. It has your own face, but it is brighter, purer, and more radiant. It may even be crystal clear. Take your time to make the body and its pedestal bright and clear.

When you feel comfortable with the Refined Human Body, place your mind gently inside the Refined Human Body. Expand to fill the whole body. Feel the body from the inside. Feel the arms. Feel the legs. Feel the head. Feel the toes. Say to yourself, “I am the Refined Human Body. I have become the Refined Human Body. I have the Refined Human mentality.” When you feel comfortable inside the Refined Human Body, place your mind gently inside the sphere at the center of the refined human body. Focus on the pinpoint of bright light at the center of the center. The center expands itself and you see your Celestial Body. [Please see all 18 bodies on page 69.]

For those who reach this state of mind, go on with the same procedure. As larger and larger, more and more radiant bodies appear, become each more refined body, one-by-one, until you reach Dhammakāya. Dhammakāya looks like a transparent Buddha statue – very radiant, very pure! The Buddha statue, sitting cross-legged, is about 9 meters in height and width. Become Dhammakāya fully, right away.

And now, let us share all of the merit that we have made in this meditation and previously – together with all of our loving kindness – with all beings everywhere through-



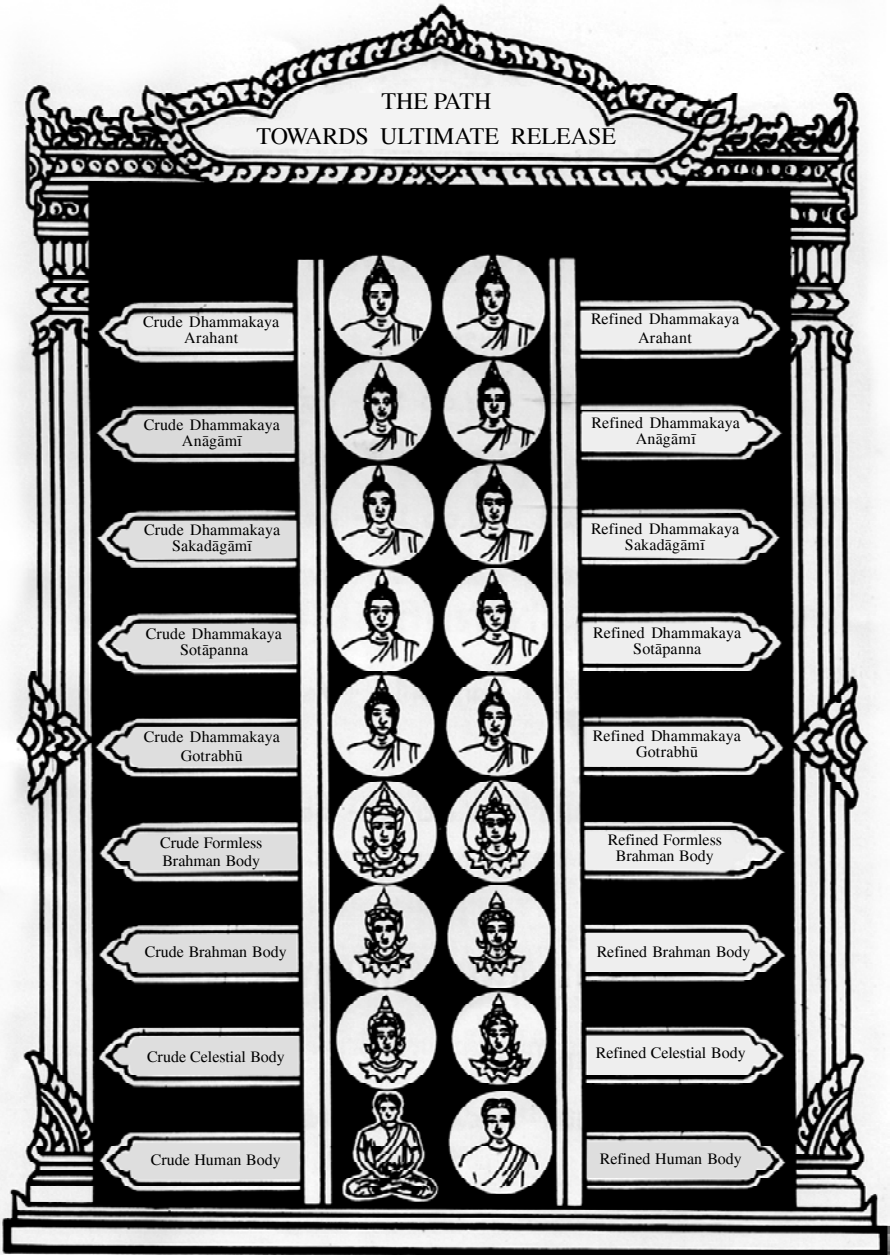
out the universe. We share with our parents, our grandparents, our family, our teachers and our friends. We share with our King and our Queen and the whole royal family. May Lord Buddha bless all of us to lead a peaceful, happy life, free from suffering, free from problems and free from enmity, and may this meditation help to bring us closer to transcendence and Nirvana. [Pause]. And, now, we come slowly out of meditation and open the eyes.

Interviewer: Thank you very much, Dr. Phra Rajyanvisith. We reverently appreciate your superb meditation instruction.

Phra Rajyanvisith: May Lord Buddha bless all of you. We would like to invite you all to join us for meditation at Wat Luang Phor Sodh, any Sunday. Our bus leaves from Wat Saket, the Golden Mountain Temple, at seven o'clock every Sunday morning. I lead morning chanting and meditation for all, beginning at nine thirty, and Phra Bart conducts an afternoon meditation session in English from twelve to two P.M. Please come join us.

For details, please see our English websites at [www.dhammadcenter.org](http://www.dhammadcenter.org) and [www.meditationpark.org](http://www.meditationpark.org) or our Thai website at [www.dhammadakaya.org](http://www.dhammadakaya.org).







### **SUMMARY & CONCLUSION**

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In summary, this volume has presented the series of broadcasts from January through June of 2010. It takes its lead from the Red-shirt – Yellow-shirt conflict in Bangkok and begins by stressing that social harmony brings peaceful happiness. However, the volume then turns quickly to personal advice on how each reader can guide his or her life to foster peaceful happiness based on Buddhist principles. Finally, Chapter 7 returns to national problems and concludes with a specific proposal for formalizing constitutional democracy based on the Buddhist principles considered throughout the book.

Chapter 2 explicitly stated the overall theme that social harmony leads to peaceful happiness. It highlighted three basic causes underlying the social conflict and recommended Lord Buddha's six *Sāranīya-dhamma* or Acts of Conciliation as ways to overcome the conflict. Chapter 3 focused on personal core values (*Sāradhamma*) for over-

coming suffering and living joyfully based on human-level precepts, celestial-level Divine Abode (*Brahma-vihāra*) virtues or transcendent-level Perfections.

Chapter 4 emphasized that the Buddhist path is not easy. Being born human, staying alive, hearing the True Teachings and becoming a Buddha are all very difficult. They require diligent mindfulness. Chapter 5 reiterated Lord Buddha's admonishment to avoid fools and seek out the wise. Fools include both those who wander aimlessly and those who behave shamelessly based on wrong view, courting dangers, obstacles and accidents which can engulf their associates. In contrast, wise-men who live mindfully can open opportunities for oneself and one's family.

Chapter 6 brought the message that only loving-kindness can conquer hatred. This highlighted the psychological roots underlying social conflict and pinpointed the affection, compassion, forbearance and forgiveness that we should each mindfully foster in our personal behavior. Finally, Chapter 7 brought us back to the social and national-level applications of the Buddhist principles studied: the gratitude we owe to our country for mothering us, the unity we need to live together in peaceful harmony, the requirement to elect wise representatives who will act advantageously with loving kindness and compassion, and the necessity for national leaders to act with integrity, justice and virtue for the good of the nation and the people as a whole.

In conclusion, Chapter 7 proposes that we can properly honor our King by legally formalizing a constitutional monarchy with sovereignty stemming from the consensus of all citizens who then request the King to serve as Head of State and employ the power to govern. Thus, this little volume demonstrates once again that Lord Buddha's Ultimate Truth is timeless, providing sound advice for our most pressing national problems thousands of years later.

*Phra Khru Baitika Dr. Barton Yanathiro*  
*Interviewer and Editor*





## Appendices

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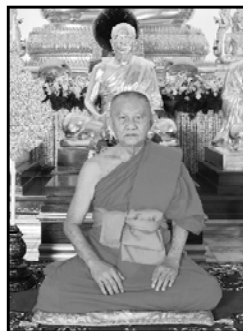


## Appendix A

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### The Author:

**Dr. Phra Rajyanvisith (Hon. D.)**



**Meditation Master, Buddhist Scholar & Educator**

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1. Abbot, Wat Luang Phor Sodh Dhammakāyārām (July 9, 1991).
2. President, the Executive Committee, National Coordination Center of Provincial Meditation Institutes of Thailand (Elected by the Directors of Provincial Meditation Institutes from throughout the country at a Seminar and Practicum organized by the National Buddhist Office 23-25 April 2008 at Wat Yanawa, Bangkok, Thailand and recognized by the Sangha Body).
3. Director and Principal-Meditation Master, Wat Luang Phor Sodh Buddhist Meditation Institute (Since 2006) *An Associated Institution of the World Buddhist University*.
4. Vice-chairman, the Administrative Committee, Mahachulalongkorn-rajabhidyalaya University Region 15 Academic Services Center (November 19, 2007).
5. Director, Dhammakāya Buddhist Meditation Institute (1981).

6. Manager, Rajburi Provincial Pali Studies Center (Appointed by the Sangha Body, October 20, 1999).
7. Director, Rajburi Provincial Meditation Practice Center (Appointed by the Sangha Body, March 6, 2001).
8. Director, Center for Development of Virtues and Ethics for the Security of the Nation, Religion and Monarchy (2009).

## Profile as a Monk

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<b>Name:</b>	Phra Rajyanvisith (Phra Ajahn Maha Sermchai Jayamangalo) Abbot of Wat Luang Phor Sodh Dhammakāyārām, and Director of Dhammakaya Buddhist Meditation Institute
<b>Date of Birth:</b>	March 6, 1929.
<b>Entered Monkhood:</b>	March 6, 1986.
<b>Buddhist Dhamma:</b>	Completed grade three of Buddhist Theory, and grade six of Pali studies.
<b>Meditation Master:</b>	Venerable Phra Rajbrahma-thera, Deputy Abbot, Meditation master, Wat Paknam

**Meditation Experience:** Practiced Buddhist meditation since 1970.

**Preceptorship:** Appointed since January 31, 1996.

**Ecclesiastical Title  
from December 5, 1998:** Phra Bhavana Visutthikhun

**Ecclesiastical Title  
from December 5, 2004:** Phra Rajyanvisith



An honorary Doctorate in Buddhist Principles in Management from Mahachulalongkorn-rajavidyalaya University in 2007.

An honorary Doctorate in Religious Study in Buddhism from Mahamakut Buddhist University in 2009.

## Profile before Monkhood

---

**Work:** Research specialist, United States Information Services (USIS), Bangkok.

Visiting lecturer in research methodology, research and evaluation, and public opinion surveys to various academic institutions (Thammasart University, Bangkok University, etc.).

**Academic Qualifications:** Certificate in accountancy, Bachelors of Commerce, and Masters of Arts in public administration (Honors), Thammasart University.

Certificate in social science research, Institute of Social Research, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA.

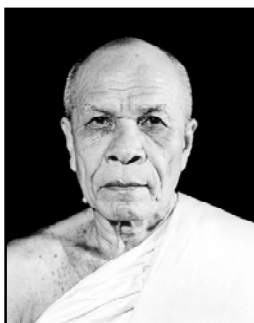
Certificate in Wang OIS Management Courses, organized by USIS, Washington DC, USA.



## *Appendix B*

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### **Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni (Sodh Candasaro)**



#### **The Late Abbot of Wat Paknam Bhasicharoen**

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The master of the Vijjā Dhammakāya approach, the late Abbot of Wat Paknam, the Venerable Chao Khun Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni, is fondly known and revered throughout the land as Luang Phor Wat Paknam, or simply as “Luang Phor Yai,” meaning senior father or meditation master.

Luang Phor was born October 10, 1884 (BE 2427) to a humble rice-merchant family of Supanburi Province as Sodh, the second child of Nai Ngern and Nang Sudjai Meekaewnoi. As was typical in those days, young Sodh received his education from the temples. At fourteen, when his father died, he became the chief breadwinner for the family. Successful as he was in rice trading, at age nineteen the compassionate young man resolved to become a monk (*Bhikkhu*) for life.

Having made arrangements to ensure his mother’s welfare, the young man entered monkhood three years later,

in July 1906 (BE 2449). At the age of twenty-two, he was ordained as Candasaro Bhikkhu at Wat Songpeenong, near his home. Phra Ajahn Dee of Wat Pratusarn, Supanburi, was his main Preceptor.

The day after his ordination, Candasaro Bhikkhu began meditation practice and study of Pali scriptures in search of deeper and wider knowledge, he moved from Wat Songpeenong to Wat Bodhi (Wat Phra Chetupon Vimomangkalaram) in Bangkok. There, he frequented the centers of meditation practice and Pali study.

Soon, Luang Phor was recognized by his teachers, Phra Khru Yanavirati (Po) of Wat Bodhi and Phra Ajahn Singha of Wat Lakorn Tham, as an accomplished meditation instructor.

During those early dry seasons, Luang Phor adopted *Dhutangavatra*, the Austere Practices for Purification such as wandering in solitude through the forest wilderness, staying in caves and practicing the Dhamma with piety.

After ten years, Luang Phor set aside his informal study of the Pali Scriptures, having reached sufficiency to read the Mahāsatiṭṭhāna Sutta. Thereafter he devoted himself totally to meditation practice.

Luang Phor spent the next Buddhist Lent at Wat Bang Khoo Vieng, on Bangkok Noi Canal, where his benefactor,

Phra Ajahn Choom, was the abbot. There, at nightfall on the full-moon day of September, in his twelfth year as a *Bhikkhu*, Luang Phor prepared himself for meditation in the *uposatha*. He invoked illumination and guidance, and made a vow dedicating his life to Buddhism. Luang Phor vowed not to rise from his seat in front of the Buddha statue until he was permitted to attain some understanding of the Dhamma as discerned by the Buddha.

With his mind set and its components of vision, memory, thought and cognition all at rest at the center of his body, two “Anguli” (joints of the middle finger) above the navel, Luang Phor was able to penetrate the full depths of the Dhamma as it was revealed to and by the Buddha. That revelation of the Dhamma and ever more refined Dhammakāyas (Dhamma bodies) was so profound that it was only possible when the mind was at rest at the body’s center. After lent, Luang Phor went to teach at Wat Bang Pla, where three monks and four laymen who followed his meditation procedure were also able to attain various degrees of insight. Thereafter, Luang Phor gradually became renowned throughout the land.

Somdej Phra Vanarat, Head of Bhasicharoen Sangha District, spotted Luang Phor’s potential and requested him to assume the Abbotship of Wat Paknam Bhasicharoen. This was a neglected and deteriorating monastery erected five centuries earlier. Luang Phor wanted to decline this request,

but he could not. With utmost patience and remarkable leadership, Luang Phor gradually rebuilt the monastery until it is today one of the largest and most important monasteries in the land. In 1949 (BE 2492), Luang Phor received the ecclesiastical rank of Phra Bhavana-Kosolthera. This was followed by the title Phra Mongkol-Rajmuni, and in 1957 (BE 2500) by the title Phra Mongkol-Thepmuni.

Vijjā Dhammakāya, the revelation of the Dhamma as attained by Luang Phor, was the heart of his teaching. His service to Buddhism can be seen from his regular routine:

- Meditating day and night with *Bhikkhus* and *Upāsikās* in different sessions.
- Leading *Bhikkhus* and *Sāmaṇeras* in the uposatha every morning and evening, paying homage to the Triple Gems and ending with a sermon.
- Teaching public meditation practice every Thursday at 2:00 pm.
- Delivering public sermons on holy days (*Uposatha* or *Wan Phra*) and Sundays.
- Supervising the Pali Institute.

Thus, Luang Phor devoted his time and effort almost exclusively to teaching meditation. His disciples multiplied



into the thousands. It was not uncommon for revered *bhikkhus* in far corners of the country, who apparently never met Luang Phor, to know him well and to respect him as their mentor.

His decease at the age of 75, on February 3, 1959 (BE 2502) was just a pause for the immortal master. His life should serve to remind other mortals to pursue their own obligations to the Noble Path carefully. Luang Phor's teachings live on, manifesting the *Ultimate Righteous Truth*.

*Written by Phra Bhavana-Kosolthera  
Veera Ganuttamo (Now Phrarajbrahmathera)*





### **Wat Luang Phor Sodh Dhammakāyārām** **Damnoen Saduak District, Rajburi Province**

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#### **1. Wat Luang Phor Sodh Dhammakāyārām**

The temple is located on the beautifully landscaped campus of the Dhammakāya Buddhist Meditation Institute at kilometer 14 of the Damnoen Saduak - Bangpae Road, in Damnoen Saduak District of Rajburi Province, 93 kilometers from Bangkok. It encompasses 244 rais. The 74 rais surrounding the main monastery were registered in 1991 as Wat Luang Phor Sodh Dhammakāyārām, in loving memory of Luang Phor Wat Paknam, Phra Mongkol-Thep-muni (Sodh Candasaro). Here is a brief Profile:

Address: 109 Moo 7 Damnoen Saduak - Bangpae Road,  
Damnoen Saduak District, Rajburi Province,  
70130.

Phone: (032) 745-180, Ext. 220/191

Fax: (032) 745-170

Websites: [www.dhammacenter.org](http://www.dhammacenter.org)

Email: [bmi@dhammacenter.org](mailto:bmi@dhammacenter.org)

## 2. Dhammakaya Buddhist Meditation Institute

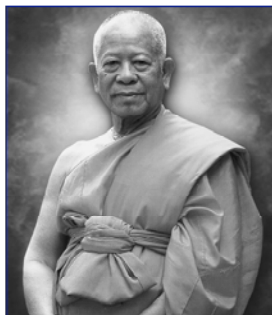


### 1. President

His Holiness Somdej Phra Buddhajahn: Abbot, Wat Saket, Sangha Council & Chairman, Acting Sangharaja Committee.

### 2. Vice-President

His Holiness Somdej Phra Mahā Ratchamangkalajahn: Abbot, Wat Paknam Bhasicharoen & Sangha Council Member.



### 3. General Manager and Meditation Master

Phra Rajyanvisith: Abbot, Wat Luang Phor Sodh Dhammakāyārām & Coordinator, Provincial Meditation Institutes.

### 4. Financial and Property Management

Dhammakaya Buddhist Meditation Foundation.

### 3. Founding

- 21 May 1991 Registered as a Wat [a temple] by the Ministry of Education and recognized by the Sangha body
- 2 May 1992 Consecrated as a Temple by His Holiness Somdej Phra Buddhaghosajahn, Former Abbot of Wat Sampaya, Bangkok, and Sangha Council Member.

### 4. Recognized Excellence

- 1999 Recognized by the Sangha Body as Rajburi Provincial Pali Studies Center.
- 2004 Recognized by the Sangha Body as Rajburi Provincial Meditation Institute.
- 2005 Designated by the Sangha Body as an “Exemplary Development Temple with Noteworthy Success.”
- 2006 Established as Sangha Ecclesiastical Region 15 Academic Services Unit for Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University (for four provinces).
- 2006 Wat Luang Phor Sodh Buddhist Meditation Institute established as an Associated Institution of the World Buddhist University.

- |      |                                                                                                                                          |
|------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2008 | Elected the National Coordination Center of Provincial Meditation Institutes of Thailand.                                                |
| 2009 | Established by the Sangha Body as the Center for Development of Virtues and Ethics for the Security of the Nation, Religion and Monarchy |

## 5. Objectives

1. To help humans rid themselves of suffering and penetrate Nirvana.
2. To educate laity and monks to become knowledgeable, virtuous instructors spreading Lord Buddha's teachings.
3. To become a center of virtue supporting peace for all world beings.
4. To become a pilgrimage center for the faithful:
  - Displaying sacred objects worthy of veneration.
  - Providing a clean, beautiful, serene environment for peaceful meditation and introspection.
5. To faultlessly manage and preserve the sacred treasures and offerings of the faithful.

## 6. Buildings and Grounds

**1. The Ubosota Hall** is a three-story building located on its own island, surrounded by trees. Like most Wat Luang Phor Sodh buildings, it is all white, with a white roof to indicate purity.



Designed by the king's architect in the late Ayuthaya style, it won the award for Outstanding Preservation of Architecture in 1996. The building features Buddha Relics and over forty Buddha images made of semi-precious gemstones or valuable metals, located at the front of the main assembly hall on the third floor. The second floor displays a large plaque listing major donors. The first floor, which can hold approximately one hundred people, has the history and rules of the wat displayed on the wall. Surrounding the main assembly hall are six small viharas or chapels, three on each side. The two middle viharas contain rare Buddha images and an image of Luang Phor Sodh. The others are used for breakout meditation groups.



**2. The Information Center**, situated at the central fork as the first building to receive visitors, is a white two-story enclosed pavilion with an extremely steep white roof. Its

main Buddha image is in blessing position. There is also an image of Luang Phor Sodh where the laity can pay homage. Originally, this was a multipurpose hall for all temple activities. It has now become a museum filled with Buddha relics, Buddha statues, and related displays.

### 3. The Vihara of Luang Phor Sodh

is located at the center of its own sacred island right by the central fork. It is surrounded by rare trees with historical significance for Buddhism. There are two images of Luang Phor Sodh, a large, ferocious standing image and a relatively small, approachable sitting statue that devotees love to honor with gold leaf and offerings.



### 4. The Two Twin School Buildings

are three-stories high and constructed of red brick. They are located at the back, left of the campus, by the Dining Hall. These buildings

get heavy use. Monks study Dhamma and Pali for the national exams. For Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, the Wat teaches Bachelors and Masters Degree programs in Buddhism. The buildings also service a continual stream of grade school and high school students coming for brief retreats. Most popular is the library with its Internet connection.

### 5. Sala Somdej Dining Hall

is a three-story white building which can serve up to 500 monks and novices on the second level. The first level provides both dining hall and



sleeping quarters for large numbers of Laity. The top floor is an assembly hall for up to 500 persons, used for morning and evening chanting, Sunday Dhamma practice, and major special events.



**6. The Meditation Vihara,** located in the lake, near the Abbot's residence, is the Wat's most beautiful building. Four equal wings join in sweeping upward curves into a tall central tower with an onion-shaped cap. Inside, one wing is devoted to Buddha statues and another to Buddha relics. The remainder seats about 130 meditators sitting cross-legged.

Accessible from both banks of the lake by two bridges, the hall is occupied twenty-four hours a day by shifts of advanced meditators cultivating world peace. It is open on weekends for visitors to pay homage to the large golden Buddha statue and Buddha Relics.



**7. Phra Maha Cetiya Somdej**, under construction, will be a huge, four-story cetiya-shaped pilgrimage and conference center displaying the wat's exceptional collection of Buddha relics. Four wings and connecting stairways come together to form a Cetiya shape.



The first floor will provide space for up to 2,000 lay persons to attend conferences or meditate. It will also contain the administrative offices. The second floor will provide space for up to 2,000 monks to meditate. The third floor will be a museum exhibiting Buddha statues demonstrating all the various poses as well as samples of meditation practices. The smaller fourth floor at the neck of the Cetiya is where the Buddha Relics will be displayed.

8. The grounds of the wat and institute campus are noteworthy in themselves. The first five years of site development were devoted to constructing the lake, rivers, forests and islands and planting rare and special trees from around the world. This effort won a royal award for turning the worn-out rice land back to nature. Most of the trees under which various Buddhas have become enlightened are represented.

## 7. Programs in Thai and English

The Wat conducts numerous educational programs on meditation and scripture study in both Thai and English, as follows:

### Programs in Thai

1. **Sunday Dhamma Practice:** Wat bus leaves Wat Saket, Bangkok, at 07:00 and returns about 16:00.
2. **Workshops:** 3, 5, 7, or 10-day meditation-Dhamma study workshops for various lay groups – students, teachers, government officials, state enterprise/private business personnel, etc., (year-round except during the rainy-season), train over 20,000 participants per year.
3. **Retreats:** Two semi-annual retreats for hundreds of laity and monks, May and December 1-14, since 1982.
4. **Vipassanā Teacher Training:** Two-week courses for meditation masters.
5. **Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University:** Pre-university studies for Monks in Region 15, BA in Buddhist Studies, MA in Buddhist Administration.
6. **Dhamma Studies School:** Three month preparation for National Dhamma Exams (Nakdhamma 3, 2, 1).

7. **Pali Studies School:** Three month preparation for national Pali exams in grammar and levels 1-9.
8. **Radio Broadcasts:** Lecture on Dhamma (Mostly) every 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of every other month at 08.00 - 08.30 AM. on National Broadcasting Station of Thailand, Own FM radio station plus weekly and monthly national and international Dhamma Talks in Thai.
9. **TV Broadcasts:** Every 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month at 05:00 on Modern 9 TV, every morning at 05.00 - 06.00 AM. on Asia Update Channel.
10. **Publications:** Over 70 books, numerous pamphlets, and a monthly journal in Thai.
11. **Ordination for Monks:** Ordinations most Saturdays plus special group ordinations.
12. **Ordination for Novices:** Two-week “Hot Season” Novices Program.
13. **Special Ceremonies:** Four major Buddhist holidays plus Dhammakāya holidays plus special events.
14. **24-hour Meditation for World Peace** Continual advanced meditation in shifts around the clock.
15. **Pilgrimage Center:** Now building Phra Maha Cetiya Somdej to display the Wat’s exceptional collection of Buddha relics.
16. **Center for making merit:** The Wat is offering very sacred Buddha statues as “Thank you” for major donations for Cetiya construction, some donated by celestial beings.

17. **Website:** Dhamma & meditation in Thai on *www.dhammadakaya.org*.

## Programs in English

1. **Meditation Guidance:** Year-round, semi-private meditation guidance in English, which has proved astoundingly effective. Come anytime and stay as long as you like.
2. **Retreats:** Three intensive retreats May 1-14, August 1-14, and December 1-14.
3. **Website:** Buddhist Meditation Institute (An Associated Institution of the World Buddhist University) at *www.dhammadcenter.org*.
4. **Radio Broadcasts:** Monthly Dhamma Talks over National Broadcasting Service of Thailand – 08:00 on the first Sunday of each month on FM88, FM95.5, FM107, and AM918. Downloadable from websites and published every six months.
5. **Buddhist Immersion – EFL:** The Wat conducts programs for international volunteers to serve as teachers of English for monks, novices and others while participating in Thai temple life and learning meditation. Potential volunteers should Contact Global Service Corps of San Francisco (*www.globalservicecorps.org*).

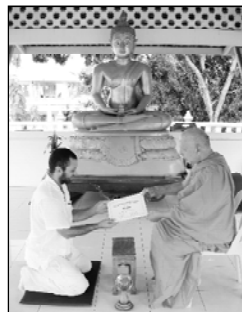
## *Appendix D*

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### **International Meditation**

#### **Wat Luang Phor Sodh Buddhist Meditation Institute**

*An Associated Institution of the World Buddhist University*



Wat Luang Phor Sodh Buddhist Meditation Institute, an Associated Institution of the World Buddhist University, teaches Concentration-Insight Meditation (*Samadha-Vipassanā*), which has proved astoundingly effective. Meditation proceeds to successively higher levels by always focusing at the center of the center.

## 1. Meditation Guidance

BMI offers Meditation Guidance or semi-private tutoring in English all year round, starting whenever you choose and lasting as long as you like. If you have the time, please try to come for 10 days to two weeks, for the best result. It generally requires 5-7 days to develop the inner calm necessary for rapid progress. But, individuals vary greatly, so all are welcome for either longer or briefer periods.

## 2. Meditation Retreats

BMI offers three intensive retreats per year, May 1-14, August 1-14, and December 1-14. Retreats are similar to guided meditation, but more intensive, with a sunrise meditation at 05:30. They usually involve 20-50 international meditators. Several hundred monks and laity attend the Thai retreat simultaneously in May and December. During retreats there is more access to the venerable Meditation Master in joint Thai-English sessions. This is especially useful for those who become advanced. There is also more chance to study Buddhist practices, Vinaya, Dhamma and Chanting. The large number of participants necessarily implies less silence.

### 3. Buddhist Immersion – EFL

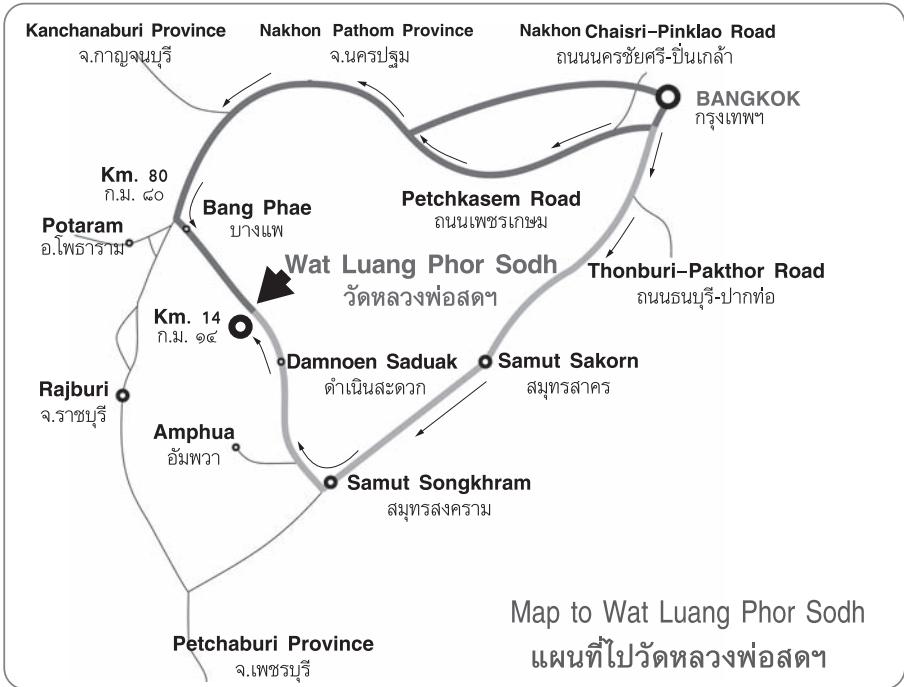
BMI conducts year-round programs for international volunteers to contribute their services as teachers of English for monks, novices, hill-tribe workers and others while participating in and experiencing Thai temple life, learning meditation and studying Thai Buddhism. The program also includes orientation to Thai culture and a visit with villagers in a rural temple.

Potential volunteers should Contact Global Service Corps of San Francisco ([www.globalservicecorps.org](http://www.globalservicecorps.org)).

### 4. Contact

Please see our website [www.dhammacenter.org](http://www.dhammacenter.org), where you can register online or **email** us at [bmi@dhammacenter.org](mailto:bmi@dhammacenter.org) or call Phra Bart at (+66) 089-068-0521.

Wat Luang Phor Sodh Dhammakāyārām is 2 hours southwest of Bangkok by **#78** air-conditioned bus, which leaves from the left-hand sidewalk outside the Southern Bus Terminal, every 20 minutes 06:00-19:00. **Do not look for the bus inside the station and Do Not Take Any Other Bus!!!** Look for the bus in stall #1 or by the large blue sign in English towards the back of the sidewalk which says “**No. 78 Damnoen Saduak, FLOATING MARKET.**”





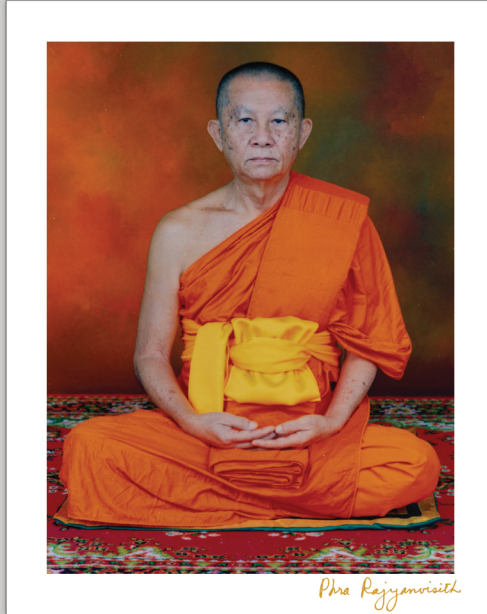
## Tributes from Meditators Around the World

- **Rianne, Holland:** Extremely valuable; once in a lifetime opportunity! I will take this with me back home and enjoy Buddhism the rest of my life.
- **Pablo, Chile:** Extremely valuable; made me feel one with the world. I feel love, peaceful love for everything and everybody.
- **Lieke, Holland:** This trip has been the best thing I've ever done in my life, and the things I've learned and seen out of meditation are a very important part of it. I want to thank you so much. Never in this life will I forget about this experience, and I will definitely continue meditating at home.
- **Richard, USA:** Extremely valuable; this all too short time, none-the-less did give me an entirely new awareness of an inner world of richness and resourcefulness that wants to be known and welcomed into conscious awareness.
- **Roosmarijn, Holland:** Very valuable; my meditation studies showed me a new world and that I was capable to get there – that was more than I expected.
- **Rachel, Canada:** Extremely valuable. As we say, I “straightened my head out” ...many illusions, veils were lifted and things were sorted out ... I realized a new way to live that I had really known all along.

- **Niels, Holland:** Extremely valuable. It let me put life in a much bigger perspective than I've ever seen it in before. It showed me what's really important in life. And, it definitely encouraged me to live in a more altruistic way. (*Niels's mother was so impressed with his meditation that she also came with her friend, and both meditated to experiencing Nirvana.*)
- **Anke, Germany:** Extremely valuable. In Nirvana I was overwhelmed. I knew I don't have to doubt any more. Whatever I've seen and felt was real. I never meditated before and achieved quite much in such a short time. (*She declared herself a follower of the Buddha.*)
- **Andrew, USA:** I didn't know much about Buddhism and wasn't sure what to expect. I tried to keep an open mind and couldn't have followed a better approach. I was able to purify myself mentally and spiritually. The environment of the wat emanates peace and contentment. The monks were some of the most peaceful, respectful people I have ever met and led by example rather than proselytizing. Phra Bart guided us with patience and a sense of humor. All in all, it's hard to think of a time better spent. I have become a more confident, clear-thinking person. I encourage anyone out there to give the Meditation Institute a try.
- **Steve, Singapore:** Extremely valuable! In Nirvana I saw Lord Buddha. In Heaven I felt very peaceful. In Hell I saw my grandpa. You can really experience things that you cannot see with the eye. It is very peaceful when you are in Nirvana.

- **Judith, Holland:** Very Valuable! In Heaven I saw celestial beings living on clouds and a mountain and felt peace and lightness. I've made a big step from no experience. Now I know I'm on the right way. I did not ever expect to be able to feel so calm and peaceful and happy while meditating, but also afterwards.
- **Teddi, USA:** Extremely valuable! In Nirvana I felt completely weightless, at peace and stillness. I reached a level of peace and stillness that I never had before. I'm not sure exactly what happened, but it was the most beautiful experience of my life. This is a wonderful program. Everyone was very kind and patient. The food was great! Just keep doing what you are doing!





- Abbot, Wat Luang Phor Sodh Dhammakayaram (July 9, 1991).
- President, the Executive Committee, National Coordination Center of Provincial Meditation Institutes of Thailand.
- Director and Principal-Meditation Master, Wat Luang Phor Sodh Buddhist Meditation Institute (Since 2006) An Associated Institution of the World Buddhist University.
- Vice-chairman, the Administrative Committee, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University Region 15 Academic Services Center (November 19, 2007).
- Director, Dhammakaya Buddhist Meditation Institute (1981).
- Manager, Rajburi Provincial Pali Studies Center (Appointed by the Sangha Body, October 20, 1999).
- Director, Rajburi Provincial Meditation Practice Center (Appointed by the Sangha Body, March 6, 2001).
- Director, Center for Development of Virtues and Ethics for the Security of the Nation, Religion and Monarchy (2009).